

W. J. Scheerer Earned Master Model Railroader 631.

2020 February

CREW CALL: Clinicians for immediate openings! We are looking for some good men and women to move the train forward.

What is EduTRAIN®?

The primary purpose of the NMRA is the education of all our members. While camaraderie, providing standards, and sitting through Division meetings are fun, education is the basis of our association. The basic EduTRAIN® principle was formulated around 2013. Recently, the program has lost some of its initial traction. We are going to release the brakes and push the throttle forward a few notches.

With the advent of the internet and various "social media" paths, there are many options to gather some knowledge. Good, bad, or indifferent, it's "out there." So why is EduTRAIN® any better? EduTRAIN® provides a process that certifies peer-reviewed and approved clinics that meet high-quality standards. These clinics include the speaker's notes that go beyond a visual slide and detail the nuances of the presentation. With these detailed speaker notes, these EduTRAIN® clinics can be presented by clinicians at the Division or Region level. There are currently 19 EduTRAIN® clinics available for immediate download at <https://www.nmra.org/edutrain/edutrain-approved-clinics>. Fifteen different clinicians have provided these clinics. The subjects are broad in scope and should provide a taste of what is currently available. The clinics are available to NMRA members on the member pages.

If you have ever been fortunate enough to attend a National Convention, you most probably saw some world-class clinics being presented. Clinicians take a lot of time and effort to build worthwhile presentations to share with NMRA members. They are rewarded by the folks who come up and say, "Thank you for teaching me a new subject or a new way of doing something." The clinicians also may receive six hours of Author credit toward their Achievement Program goal. All additional presentations of the clinic go toward their Volunteer AP Certificate.

Here is where we release the brakes (after the NMRA Board approves a change in the current AP rules at its Mid-Year Board Meeting in March): a clinician who sub-

EDUTRAIN

This is an  **EduTRAIN™**
Clinic

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 **EduTRAIN™**

mits a clinic approved to be part of the EduTRAIN® program will be awarded eight hours of Author credit upon approval. This reflects the extra time and effort needed to write an EduTRAIN® clinic with its detailed speaker notes. Furthermore, if a clinician has a clinic for which he/she has already received Author credits, he/she can receive two more Author points by upgrading the clinic's speaker notes when accepted into the EduTRAIN® program. Maybe you are pursuing the Author Certificate in the Achievement Program; this change opens up a path to achieve that goal in a shorter time frame.

When you see this image as the first page of the presentation, you can be assured that you are seeing a quality body of work.

As much as we need new EduTRAIN® clinics, we also need to have volunteers present these clinics at the Division or Region level. A member, perhaps at a Division level, striving to gain some Volunteer credit could download an EduTRAIN® packaged clinic, study the speaker notes, and earn one Volunteer point by presenting the clinic to their Division members. We are not all subject matter experts or writers of great clinics, but with the support of EduTRAIN®, we'll make you look like one. 🚂

2020 February

Ernest “Ernie” Little Earned Master Model Railroader 647.

2020 March

Mike Evans Earned Master Model Railroader 642.

David Yadok Earned Master Model Railroader 590.

2020 April **The Legendary Rutger Friberg Passes**



Rutger Friberg

In Memoriam: Rutger Friberg 1945-2020

At the end of January 2020, the model railroad community lost a great pioneer.

Rutger was a prolific inventor, author, and contributor to ALLT OM hobby maga-

zine. As the second member of the NMRA's DCC Working Group, Rutger brought to the group his imagination and creativity. His early DCC clinics at the NMRA Nationals showed an imaginative variety of models with sound and extra functions, at a time when digital control was new and unseen. These early clinics helped spark the interest in controlling our trains digitally.

Rutger brought much energy to the model railroad world, creating the Junior College Program at many National Conventions, which was a hit for the young modelers.

He earned his first Achievement Program award for his scratchbuilt and fully working model of a Swedish snow plow, that would lift itself up and turn 180 degrees around so it could plow in the other direction.

Rutger was MMR® 319, received the NMRA's Distinguished Service Award in 2000, and became an NMRA Honorary Life Member in 2010.

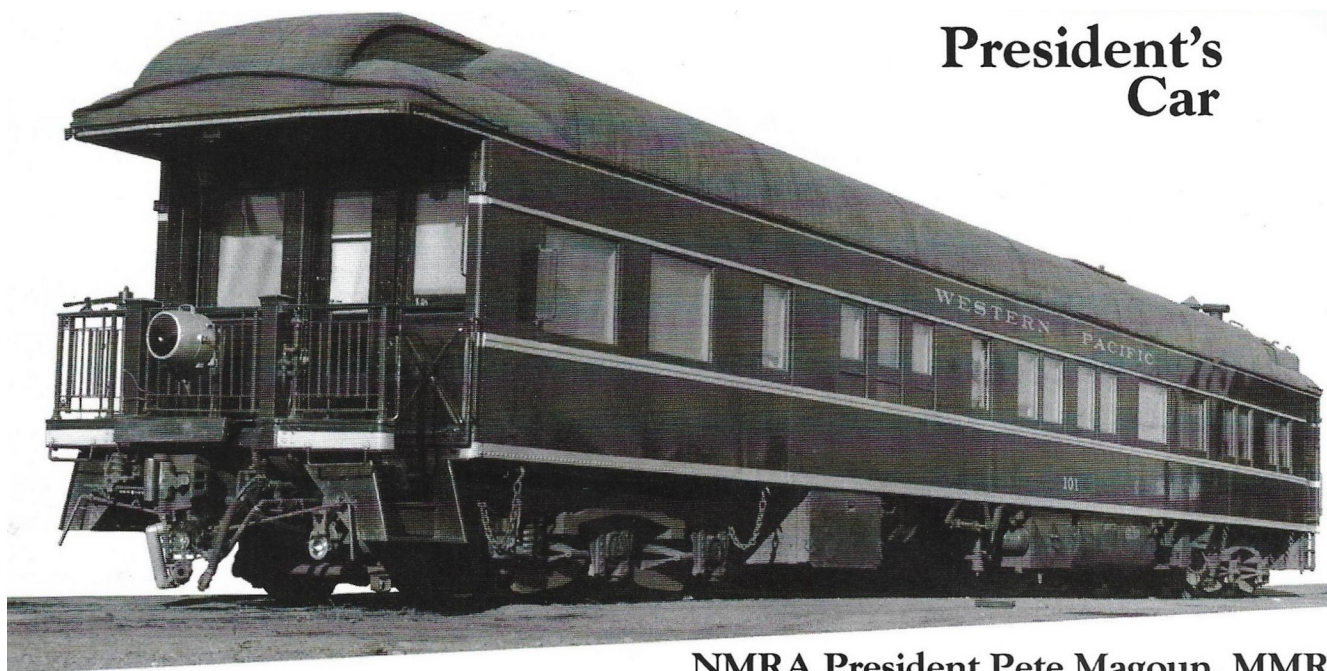
Rutger also worked with various manufacturers to release innovative products. One of the most creative was the Roco Digital Crane, a product that was fully controlled by DCC functions — a first of its kind.

I have lost a true friend, and we all have lost a creative influence in our hobby.

So, the next time you are operating your DCC locomotive with sound, please blow the whistle for Rutger. He would enjoy that.

Stan Ames

President's Car



NMRA President Pete Magoun, MMR®

Electioneering

As I write this, the Presidential Primaries in the United States have swung into high gear, and there is a lot of information and misinformation swirling about in the news. Separating the signal from the noise will be a chore for the electorate, but we need to do it to make good choices. Here, in the NMRA, we also have elections running at this time of year, and there seems to be some confusion over what exactly we're electing. Let's have a look at the process.

The NMRA is a not-for-profit educational corporation organized under the requirements and auspices of Section 501.c.3 of the United States Internal Revenue Code. This designation requires good governance on our part and allows us to enjoy tax benefits within the United States, which is where the majority of our members reside.

Many years ago, the NMRA moved from the "Region Trustee" concept to a Board of Directors elected from various Districts. Your Board recently received an e-mail asking why a member should vote for a District Director since that in-

dividual was already a Region member. Good question. The answer is pretty simple. When the NMRA reorganized, the size of what became the Board was compressed to nine Directors and three elected Officers, thereby making it more efficient and less expensive to operate. The world was carved into "Districts," each of which would provide one Director, with an at-large North American, an At-Large-Worldwide, and a Region Advisory Committee (RAC) Director added to the mix. This organizational structure provided a mechanism to ensure geographic distribution of Directors, and the District boundaries within the continental United States were, at the time, "drawn" to attempt to ensure that a relatively even distribution of members was included in each District. A quick look at a map will show you that yes, indeed, some of the boundaries manage to divide certain Regions and even Divisions into different Districts. This has nothing to do with local Region operations, but it does produce a relatively balanced electorate for choosing District Directors. The

RAC Director is chosen by the Region Presidents and is their "conduit" to and from the National Board.

So, who do these District Directors represent, and who represents *you* on the Board? Each Director has a responsibility to represent the NMRA as a whole and not a particular constituency. There is no "pork" to be handed out here, and the individuals elected to the Board and officer positions owe their loyalty to the corporation... the NMRA — all of it, all over the world. Remember that while your individual interaction with the NMRA may be limited for various good and valid reasons to a local Division, the NMRA operates all over the planet and must be compliant with local laws on several continents. Since the NMRA is now fortunate enough to have significant assets, it is imperative that those assets be managed in the best possible manner by all concerned.

And that brings us to the question of who should sit on that Board of Directors? The answer, again, is pretty simple... we're looking for people who

2020 April

President's Car Cont.

are familiar with corporate governance, who are familiar with running not-for-profit organizations, who have experience with Boards of Directors and how they operate and why, and who are good stewards of resources. Your Board is codifying this information, which is on the website, and is addressing questions put forward during the electoral process. Please note the Nominating Committee is charged with finding the best-qualified candidates possible, it is not a rubber-stamp process, and there is, indeed, a mechanism for an individual to mount a by-petition campaign for each election. Holding an MMR®, though, is not a prerequisite for being a good candidate, as there is very little in the Achievement Program processes leading to an MMR® that is conducive to good governance.

As long as I'm on the topic of elections, I'll note the same sorts of requirements/preferences for

Directors should be part of your Division and Region search processes, as each of these organizations operates under the same basic rules that govern the National operations. And as is true up and down the line, the use of NMRA media platforms to promote any individual's candidacy is not permitted... we must remain impartial at all levels. What you, as an individual, do on your social media platforms is your business, but the NMRA platforms must remain impartial.

With all that said, please embrace the electoral process, choose the most qualified candidates you can for all levels, and help make your Association stronger. Wear that "I voted" sticker proudly!

High Green!



2020 April

Stewart H. Jones earned Master Model Railroader 648.

2020 May

Joe Walters earned Master Model Railroader 644.

Pete Banks earned Master Model Railroader 628.

Eric Belshaw earned Master Model Railroader 624.

2020 May

Jeanne Spalty

Women in Model Railroading

Jeanne Spalty

It was a great afternoon operating on a large and beautiful railroad in Syracuse (Clay, New York). My husband and I were invited to join a group of about 17 engineers and conductors to run the layout for three hours from 1 to 4 PM. As I looked around, I realized I was the *only* lady, but that was okay. I knew practically everyone and felt like a member of the group. We worked in pairs, so I operated with my husband, Gordon. Our first run took about 45 minutes. We had drop-offs and pick-ups in three locations. It was fun with many decisions to make. Our second run was a very long train, which went much faster with loads to pick up and drop off in two yards.

After the run, I was approached by Bill Brown about possibly doing a clinic at a convention about women in model railroading. I had thought about writing to the *NMRA MAGAZINE*, and he convinced me to do so.

My involvement in the hobby goes way back because my husband has been a modeler for most of our 53 married years. Our present layout is about 18 years in creating. My favorite part is making trees. The railroad is a replica of Crawford Notch, Conway Scenic in New England, which we have visited several times.

Gordon Spalty photo



I guess the event that hooked me was Ops Weekend in Syracuse. I went the first

time to observe. That was it. No more watching, I had to run — three layouts (three-hour sessions) over Saturday and Sunday. What fun! This April will be the fourth Ops Weekend for me.

In the meantime, I realized I wanted to be a part of the NMRA. So last August, I sent in my application to become a member. My husband and I are joint members of the Lakeshores Division in New York, and my opportunities are many. I might be one of the very few women to be a member, but I urge other ladies to give it a try. You meet many people and form numerous friendships. I have learned so much and still have more to discover. Happy railroading. 🚂

2020 June

Pete Leach earned Master Model Railroader 649.

Chris Broughton earned Master Model Railroader 630.

In Memoriam Pat Harriman, MMR® #168

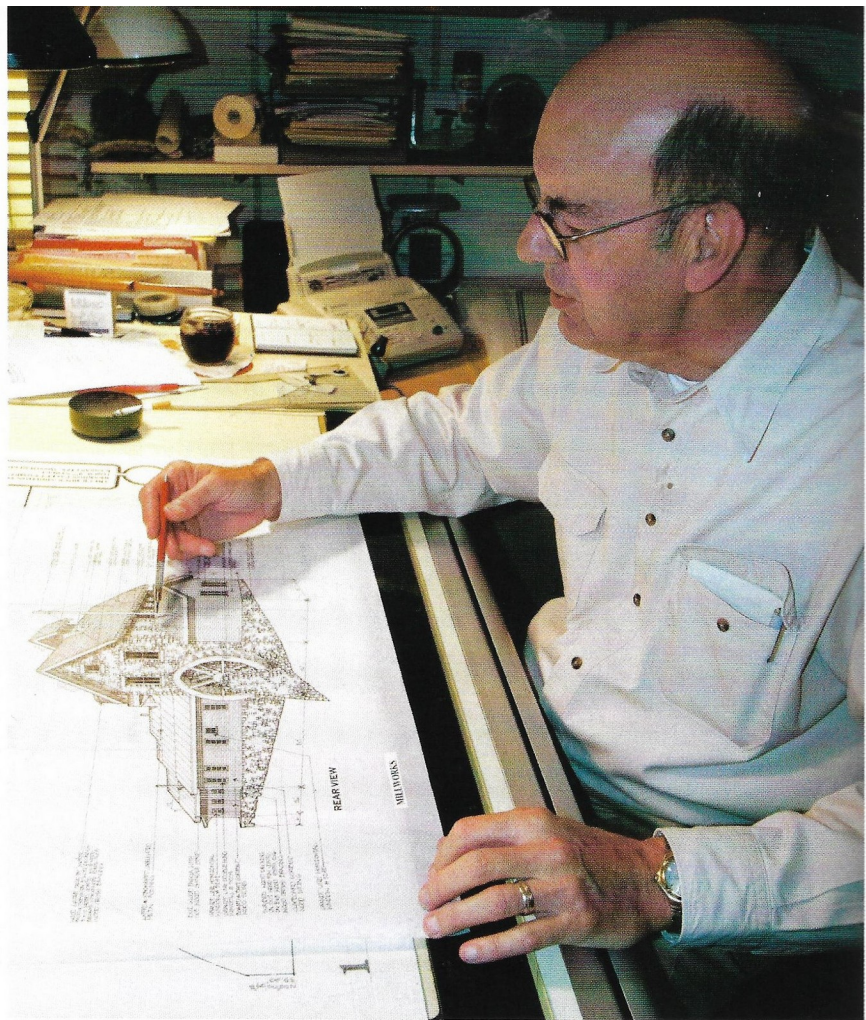
Pat Harriman, MMR® 168, passed away at 9 AM on April 1, 2020, having been in and out of the hospital numerous times during the past year. He was 80 years old.

After graduation from Kansas State University in 1966, one of Pat's first jobs was with the very prominent architectural firm of Kivett and Myers, who at the time designed the Truman baseball/football stadium complex and the new Kansas City International airport facilities. Pat became friends with Clarence Kivett, who was also a talented photographer. He worked on "pet projects" for him and gained a lot of respect and admiration for Mr. Kivett. Kivett and Myers was acquired by and is now known as HNTB Engineers and Architects. In later years Pat was self-employed with his own architectural business.

Pat was a believer and promoter of the NMRA Achievement Program. He would help anyone do better modeling and would gingerly offer positive critique to help you better your skills. As a result, he was a very good administrator of the Achievement Program. He was a mentor in every sense of the word, an all-around good guy, always willing to help anyone who wanted to hone their modeling skills. He certainly lived up to the MMR commitment.

I first met Pat in 1985 when he and his son Dan took a model railroading class I was teaching through our local Junior College. As I remember it, they took the class to have an activity they could do together. Consequently, Pat caught the model railroad bug *big time*.

When he introduced himself to others, he always said, "I'm Pat Harriman, Boy Architect." He was one of the most prolific model railroaders I've ever seen, modeling with what came to be known as "Harriman Speed." Being an architect by profession, his plans and modeling skills



were superb. He earned MMR® status early on and was instrumental in starting the Mo-Kan Rail Joiners, the Turkey Creek Division, and was also a part of the 'G' scale "Gold Creek Railroad" group. He was an Honorary Life-Time Member of the NMRA. He was an NMRA Director for the Greater Kansas City Area to the Mid-Continent Region and a past Superintendent for the Turkey Creek Division. He won many awards for his modeling skills.

On the humorous side, many of us remember going to the National NMRA Convention in Denver, Colorado, where he locked his keys in his van while it was still running, and he had to call a locksmith to open it!

In addition, Pat served as the AP Chairman for many years. He authored

two books: *Early Wood And Frame Structures* (263 pages), and *Early Wood Frame And Stone Structures* (238 pages). He built two railroads: the HO-scale Shelter Bay Railway Company (*SCALE RAILS* June 2011) and the O-scale Oregon Coast Mining & Timber Railroad (*SCALE RAILS* December 2015) in the bomb shelter of his house. He also had a feature article about his OCM&TRR car roster in the *ON30 Annual* (January 2011). I can't begin to tell you how many of his plans were published in the *NMRA BULLETIN/SCALE RAILS*, but there were dozens of them.

He is survived by his wife Janel, his daughter Stacy, son Dan, and five grandchildren. He will greatly be missed.

Ron Morse, MMR®

PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNERS LISTED IN JUNE OF 2020

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF THE 2020 PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR SERVICE TO THE DIVISION

By Gerry Leone, MMR®
NMRA Vice President / Special Projects

For the past three years, "The President's Award for Service to the Division" has honored those volunteers who go out of their way to make their Division an energetic, welcoming group. Traditionally, the award winners were announced by the NMRA president at the National Convention's banquet. Although there won't be a convention or banquet this year, there are still 17 individuals who deserve to be honored for their invaluable contributions in 2019/2020.

If you're not familiar with "The President's Award for Service to the Division," it's designed to recognize those people who have contributed their time and energy to making their Division outstanding for all members. Each year, the NMRA National Board and Officers send a special request to Region Presidents, asking for nominees from their Region. Only one member from each Region is selected for this prestigious award.

Banquet or not, these are the devoted NMRA members who've earned a special place in the NMRA history of

2019/2020. We congratulate them and thank them for their above-the-call-of-duty volunteerism!

Alan Harris (Northern Rivers Division) has taken a portable layout to the far corners of the Australasian Region to help with membership recruitment. At times, these trips have taken him as far as 550 miles from home and involved him being away for up to five days at a time. During his time as Superintendent, his recruitment efforts doubled the size of his Division.

Brian Moore (Devon and Cornwall Western Union Division) has modeling skills that have helped dozens of potential modelers in the British Region see, understand, and join in the fun. He freely shares his know-how through innumerable articles and with anyone who has a question. His prototypically run Quisling, California, module has been an inspiration to fellow modelers and show-goers alike.

Donna Orr (Division 3) spent innumerable hours and unfailing energy working through red tape to get the Lone Star Region 501(c)(3) status. As Division Director, her novel approach to a convention has set the pattern for others that followed. Currently, she is also the co-chair for the upcoming NMRA National Convention in 2023.

Larry Dehl (Turkey Creek Division) has worked tirelessly in both his Division and Region to promote the hobby. Larry's a "go-to guy" when something needs to be done, and done right. In addition, his wit and warmth are always welcoming to new folks coming into the hobby in the Mid-Continent Region.

Rick Uskert (Chesapeake Division) has worn just about every hat there is to wear, from Director at Large, Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, to webmaster. Rick is the current convention committee chairman for the Mid-Eastern Region's 2021 convention and can always be counted on to come up with new ways to approach issues or events.

Bob Dawson (Division 8) joined the Mid-Central Region and his Division in 1975 and hasn't missed a year yet. Over the last two decades, he's served as Train Show Chairman, Chairman of a Region Convention, Program Chairman, and Division Officer/Trustee. Currently, he's the newsletter editor, Division Secretary, and is constantly in demand by the Louisville Public Library System and area clubs to give presentations.

Bob McGeever (South Central Wisconsin Division) joined the NMRA and the Midwest Region ten years ago, and in that time, he's made a huge im-



PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNERS LISTED IN JUNE OF 2020 Cont.

pact on his Division by first becoming Clerk and then Superintendent. Bob not only volunteered his time at the Division's train show, he later became the show's chair. In addition, he's shared his vast modeling knowledge with new modelers through a wide range of clinics.

Al Crisp, MMR® (Central Ontario Division) helped found his Division's "Craftsman Corner" event and continued to attend and support it for 40 years until medical reasons forced him to stop. In 2008, he took his "Craftsman Corner" event to Milwaukee's Trainfest and continues to share advice and guidance both in person and through email to anyone in the Niagara Frontier Region.

Mark Ellis (Motor City Division) is a volunteer who's always willing to get involved and help without ever being asked. His focus is getting things done, and he's taken that philosophy to membership recruitment, where he's had a major impact bringing new members to both his Division and the North Central Region.

Rich Breton (Seacoast Division) has spent more than 36 years in the NMRA, the Northeastern Region, and with his Division, where he served as president for six years. During each year of his term, he organized and supervised four quarterly events. He was also in charge of layout tours and operating sessions during Regional conventions, as well as being a contest judge.

Chip Meriam (Sierra Division) serves as Superintendent of his Division and consistently organizes high-quality events with clinics, contests, and layout and proto tours. Although the Division occupies a huge area within the Pacific Coast Region, Chip has made service to all members a priority. He is also editor of the Region's newsletter and secretary of the Region's Board.

Don Fowler, MMR® (San Diego Division) has used his leadership experience from 36 years in the San Diego Sheriff's Department to help guide members of his Division. He's been unselfish in his commitment to members and has served as chair or co-chair of many of the Pacific Southwest Region's conventions.

John Emmot (Pikes Peak Division) has been described as "the glue that held a Division's module group together." He inspired, assisted, and guided members with their modules, then managed to get the modules to train shows and events in the Rocky Mountain Region by agreeing to pull the trailer himself.

Steve Prevette (Central Savannah River Division) is widely regarded as the most knowledgeable person in his Division on operations, which helped ignite and inspire his small Division to become active once again. He recently stepped down as Division Superintendent, a post he held for many years. He also served as the Southeastern Region registrar despite extensive traveling for his job.

Mark Lewalski (Western Division) has been both treasurer and vice president of the Sunshine Region. He's done yeoman's service setting up bank ac-

counts, obtaining and maintaining IT services, being a webmaster, and procuring laptops. He re-established the Sunshine Region's email newsletter, which has helped all the Region's Divisions get the word out about upcoming events.

Scott Nesbit (Dakota Southeastern Division) has been the motivating force for the improvements that transformed his Division's traveling "Plywood Pacific" layout into one that's now museum-quality and averages eight outings per year throughout the Thousand Lakes Region. As a direct result of these shows, the Division has grown from a handful of members to more than 30.

There may not be a hearty round of applause for these 17 individuals at the National Convention banquet this year. But applause isn't why these members have done what they've done. They're in it for the joy of helping others and the satisfaction of making their Division one that members are proud to be a part of.

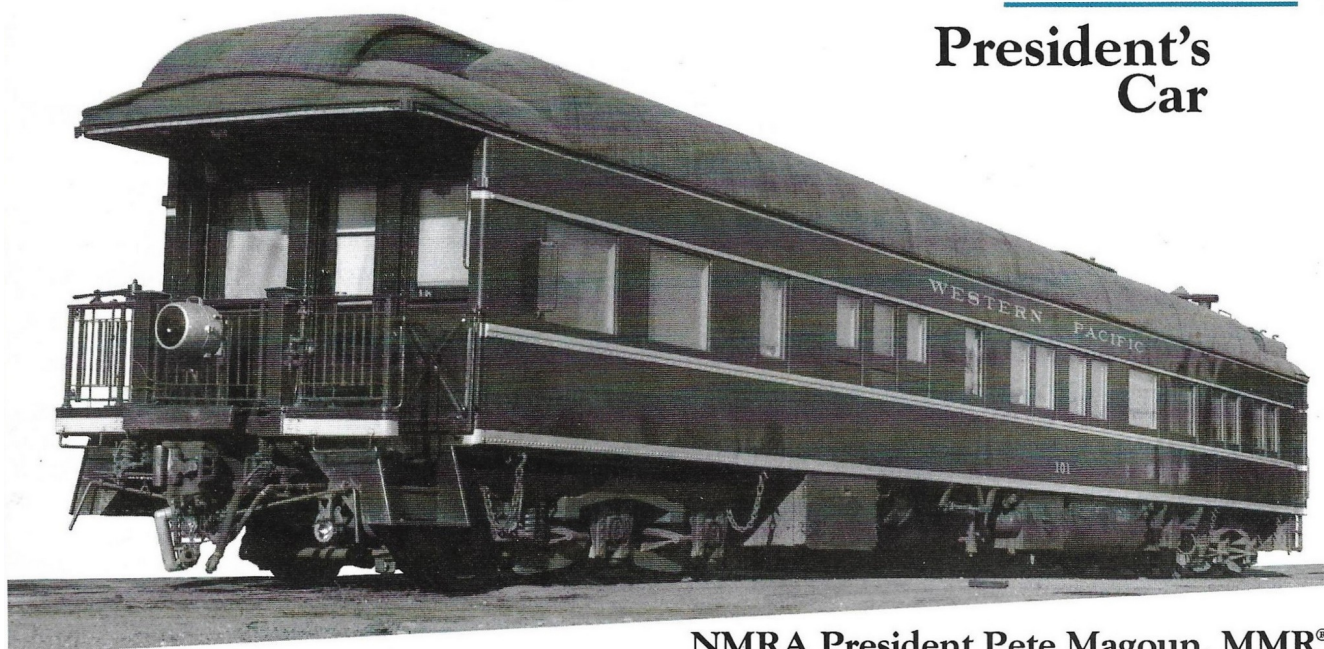
All of us in the NMRA salute these winners of the 2020 "President's Award for Service to the Division." Thank you for your time, your energy, and a job well done!

Christopher Jones (1st Division) began his service by helping his Division build a layout in the Museum at the Coos County Fairgrounds. He later became museum director, forming a train club and holding twice-annual train shows that help raise awareness of the hobby with the general public. He's served as his Division's Contest Chair for the past seven years and serves on the Pacific Northwest Region's convention committee.

2020 July

nmra
magazine

The NMRA advances the worldwide scale model railroading community through education and standards as well as advocacy and fellowship.



President's Car

NMRA President Pete Magoun, MMR®

Virtual Reality

Wikipedia defines “virtual reality” as a “simulated experience that can be similar to or completely different from the real world.” If you think about it, that is what this great hobby is all about, and we’ve been practicing it for decades. However, virtual reality is invading real life right now, with lockdowns all over the world, restrictions on what we can and cannot do where and when, and so on. There is a quality to all this that is surreal. As I write this column, the “curve” from the COVID-19 virus appears to be flattening, which is a good thing, but the death totals from the virus continue to climb, which is not good.

We’re adapting, slowly, to a new reality, which involves “social distancing” and other processes designed to slow the virus’ spread to allow a vaccine to be developed, produced, distributed, administered, and declared effective. Our gatherings are becoming virtual events, using computer technologies to stay in contact with our friends and neighbors.

All that is good, but we’re also losing things in there, and one of those is face-to-face social contact, as in the form of NMRA conventions.

As you know, the NMRA 2020 National Convention, scheduled to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, has been cancelled. The 2022 National Convention (hosted by the British Region in Birmingham, England) has lost its venues to “more important” events related to the Commonwealth Games and other large sporting events and has been cancelled as well. Both convention teams have put an enormous amount of work into the process over many years to give us all a joyful and memorable experience. The Meetings & Trade Shows Department is investigating alternative locations. It will present results and recommendations to the Board of Directors as soon as possible so we can recover quickly. Moving events back a year is not feasible due to the number of signed contracts with existing facilities in outlying years. The

NMRA Board of Directors, supported by the Officers, has enacted Resolutions praising both groups for their efforts on our behalf and expressing regret they have been forced to cancel their planned conventions. Stay tuned to this developing story.

In other news, the NMRA Marketing folks have been busy with NMRAX, a series of virtual clinics of various sorts on Facebook and YouTube. The process started with a “virtual convention,” which ran for 26 hours around the world, using moderators in the UK, Australia, and the US. The NMRAX team has since held additional “conventions.” Programs are interactive, moderated, well-received, and later placed on a YouTube channel for your viewing pleasure. See the “News You Can Use” article on page 36 for more information on NMRAX, how you can participate, and even present a clinic.

Distant Achievement Program evaluation has enormously practical

2020 July President's Column Cont.

applications, especially for remote areas where geographic distancing is not your friend. The AP Committee has been actively evaluating and refining the process for several years in multiple Regions to make it work consistently across the entire AP spectrum. Distant AP evaluation will now have utility in this new world of sometimes severe social distancing and lockdowns.

As of mid-May, the distant evaluation process is reliably used for eight of the AP Certificates and somewhat for the other three (Motive Power, Cars, and Structures). A deficiency arises when evaluating models for the Merit Award in these three categories. The method produces good results above 100 points and below 75 points, where the Merit Award quality is either obvious or some active suggestions can help a modeler improve his/her skill levels. It is the "mid-range" (75–100 points) that creates the big questions because the Merit Award hinges on a reliable, consistent, and objective evaluation process. Right now, it still requires an in-person evaluation in many cases.

Until we resolve these issues, standardize the required technology and methodology, and train the evaluators for remote evaluations, AP evaluations for Merit Awards for Cars, Motive Power, and Structures may need to be done in person if the remote scores are in the gray area. At the same time, we must avoid score inflation to get to a higher score. With the social lockdowns beginning to lift, we hope to return to in-person AP evaluations soon. One can practice social distancing and still evaluate models in person; the various parties need to maintain their social distance and use other safe practices.

Closer to home, various Regions, Divisions, and local groups have moved to electronic media to keep in touch with one another, to present clinics, layout tours, and simple social gatherings for the benefit of all. Most of these virtual get-togethers are open meetings, but they may require passwords to enter, so if you're planning to attend one, please check with one of the hosts for appropriate information. My local Ops group has been doing virtual meetings for several weeks now, and frankly, I am surprised at how much these sessions mean to me. We can remain connected even when not running trains. This process is especially important to those who live alone, so please encourage them to join your festivities.

Our At-Risk Persons policy continues to generate concern, mostly from people who have not read the policy (but rather just the headline) or the FAQs, which are posted on the website: <https://www.nmra.org/nmra-risk-persons-policy>. Please note there are links to additional information in the web pages, and please take the time to become familiar with this process, which has been forced upon us by external events. It is a response to another reality that none of us likes to have to deal with, but we must use it. You do have options, though, so again, please read through the documents and then give them some thought.

The model railroading muse, who has been "socially distancing" for a while, is now calling me, and I need to heed the siren call of the hobby.

Stay safe!
High Green!



2020 July



News YouCan Use!

NMRAx: What is it?

Article by Christina Ganzer Zambri, NMRA Marketing Consultant
and Gordon Robinson, NMRA Social Media Team



The NMRA recently launched a new initiative under the Meetings & Trade Shows Department. It is a brand-new program with outreach from National not only to benefit current NMRA members, but also to assist in our recruitment and retention efforts, and it's already proven to be a blockbuster! What follows is the origin story of NMRAx — the NMRA in the virtual world — the brainchild of Christina Ganzer Zambri, NMRA's Marketing Consultant, and Gordon Robinson, a member of the NMRA Social Media Team.

Recently, Gordon quietly ate lunch while watching a clinic on the Oahu Railroad presented by Neil Erickson. You might be thinking there's nothing spectacular or extraordinary in that statement. However, "Gordy" lives on a small, 3.5-square-mile island north of Scotland, with the famous naval anchorage of Scapa Flow protecting its western shore from the wild North Atlantic and the unpredictable North Sea to the east. He was watching Neil's *live* clinic broadcast from the Big Island of Hawaii. Two different time zones, two very different climates, one awesome experience.

Let's back up a bit. While attending his first NMRA National Convention in Orlando, Florida (2017), Gordon had a simple thought, but one whose solution seemed too huge to accomplish: How can NMRA activities become more accessible to anyone who wishes to participate? Christina had similar ambitions, wanting to help members who were less active for one reason or another continue to participate in the social aspect of the hobby. Thus, the idea of making NMRA events virtual was born.

The aim of NMRAx is simple: provide NMRA activities (live or recorded) to members, allowing participation whether or not the member can physically be present at the hosting venue, be it at the Division, Region, or National levels. Where appropriate, the NMRAx event would allow us to showcase the organization's good work across the world to members and non-members alike.

NMRAx is not a single event, nor is it just a series of social media live streams. So, what is it?

- It is virtual conventions.
- It is support and education, enabling Regions, Divisions, SIGs (Special Interest Groups), and clubs to provide virtual live or recorded events.
- It is remote support and mentorship to members working on their modeling projects.
- It is having some of the best clinicians in their field present at your local NMRA event, whether they live half a world away or in the next town.
- It is opportunities for members to ask questions directly to others in the hobby, such as our "Ask the..." series of live panel interviews, where you are the live studio audience in your home.
- It is connecting modelers with other modelers for operating sessions or other collaborative projects.

Who is on the team putting this together? The NMRAx team consists of NMRA members in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and across the United States, who continue to support a growing number of virtual events globally.

By the time you read this, several NMRAx events have already occurred. The introduction of these virtual pre-

sentations came about fairly quickly, but time and circumstances collided with COVID-19, as we are all very aware. Fortunately, launching NMRAx came much faster than initially planned to fill the gap.

The first NMRAx event took place on April 24/25. This 26-hour virtual convention streamed live to Facebook, with a new presentation or virtual layout tour starting on the hour, every hour. The event wrapped up with the first live video recording by the crew from "A Modeler's Life" podcast. This live-streamed event — put together in 12 days by the NMRAx team — featured more than 36 contributors. It could be viewed by NMRA members, non-members, and even those without a Facebook account because it was streamed on the publicly accessible NMRA Facebook page. Videos of each clinic were subsequently uploaded as one-hour segments to the NMRA YouTube channel. As a follow-up event, an "Ask the MMR[®]" panel, featuring Master Model Railroaders[®] Thomas Gasior, Clark Kooning, Jim Gore, and Gerry Hopkins, occurred on May 2.

Throughout May and June, NMRAx planned four 12-hour live events (as well as other ad hoc events) to stream via Facebook. This somewhat frequent occurrence is due to the current restrictions on large in-person gatherings; however, NMRAx virtual conventions are planned for a cadence of at least twice a year going forward, with monthly live events streamed via social media. The NMRAx team is also putting in place material to support Divisions that want to provide recordings of NMRA events or virtual meetings to their members. The NMRAx team is also training a growing pool of clinicians to offer everything from remote clinics to streaming face-to-face presentations (when allowed).

We are all aware that, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, this year's National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, had to

be canceled. The NMRAX team will provide a virtual convention on July 12–18 to replace some of the events that would have taken place in St. Louis.

The specific details of the event are still being worked out, but the team has committed to at least 12 hours of new or replayed live-streamed content each day for all seven days. You can expect clinics, layout tours, and possibly even prototype tours. We will have a celebration event for you to share your modeling efforts in the NMRA Facebook group, competitions, partner discounts for NMRA members, and remote operating sessions. A virtual banquet is even in the works for Saturday, July 18! The banquet's timing is a bit complicated since it will be breakfast, lunch, or dinner (or possibly a midnight snack), depending on where you are in the world.

The schedule for NMRAX events is posted on the NMRA Facebook page, in the NMRA Facebook group, on the NMRA Twitter feed, and the general dates and times are in the NMRA website calendar. A Constant Contact email blast will announce to all NMRA members (who have maintained their current email address with National) the com-

plete schedule and links for participating, as well as finding previous sessions. Schedules are posted using Eastern Time, British time, and Australian time. For the latest and most up-to-date information on past or future NMRAX events, visit the NMRA website and Facebook page or group.

So, what if you can't watch it live? The beauty of this technology is, if you missed any of these events, they are still available. You can find them on the NMRA Facebook Page and Facebook group under "videos."

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NMRA.org/>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nmrargroup/>

Or you'll soon be able to find them on YouTube. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of the Social Media team, the videos get edited and uploaded to the NMRA's YouTube channel during the days following the event.

<http://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGModelRailroading>

Videos on Facebook are in five- to six-hour sections without labels. Once they go on YouTube, the videos are broken out by clinic (1 hour long) and labeled

with the presenter's name and title of the presentation.

Although the big premier of NMRAX came as a surprise to many, it has been met with much positive feedback, including engaging non-members. We've rolled out the red carpet, and we hope this innovative initiative will entice former members to rejoin and new viewers to sign up for the first time. At the same time, we're attempting to retain current members by providing this new platform. So far, it appears to be working. The NMRAX is also upping our social media exposure and growing our "likes," "follows," and "subscribers."

Finally, all this wouldn't be possible without the volunteer efforts of the NMRAX team. A big "thank you" goes to Brad Anderson, Martyn Jenkins, Jordan Kramer, Gert "Speed" Muller, Christina Zambri, Gordon Robinson, and all our contributors for your hard work and long hours.

If you have skills and time to offer assistance to the NMRAX team, or if you want to present a clinic, layout tour, or remote operating session, please contact marketing@nmra.org.



WOMEN IN MODEL RAILROADING

Unlike the classic childhood obsession with trains that leads to a long and fulfilling hobby of a lifetime, I have a slightly different experience with the hobby. I work for my husband's company, TSG Multimedia, that creates videos about all things trains (prototype and models). Since he started the business in 1998, I have gotten more and more involved by providing videography, photography, production assistance, office management, research, and scriptwriting. This work allowed me to take a peek at model railroading and decide if it was for me or not.

I have been introduced to the hobby through an outsider's perspective and have been really impressed with the people who have all made me feel very welcome and included as they patiently described and explained aspects of the hobby to me, treating me as an equal. I have been inspired by the many private layouts and their creators like Jack Burgess, Dave Adams, Dave Connery, Dave Stanley, Tony Thompson, Rob Spangler, Chris Brimley, and so many more! They are truly masters of their craft.

I have been, and continue to be, inspired and excited by the hobby when I attend great events like the OPSIG (Operations Special Interest Group) and LDSIG (Layout Design Special Interest Group) meets, BAPM (Bay Area Prototype Modelers meet), EuroWest (an event put on by European Train Enthusiasts), BAGRS (Bay Area Garden Railway Society - Layout Tours and live steam events), and the Golden State Toy Train Operators Holiday Toy Train exhibit. Open house events at San Francisco Bay Area modeling groups and clubs like the Carquinez Model Railroad Society, South Bay Historical Railroad Society, Silicon Valley Lines, and San Leandro Historical Railway Society were exceptionally friendly and welcoming.

I attended my first NMRA National Convention last year in Salt Lake City, Utah, and all the folks there amazed me with their friendliness and talent. I quickly learned the National Convention



is a great place to meet people, catch up with old friends, and learn more about the hobby. I have also been very lucky to be able to observe op sessions (okay, I ran a train once or twice) and have found I am fascinated by operations. I have experienced sunset garden railroad op sessions with wine and a view, intricate and very prototypical sessions with many operators, to small, informal, relaxed op sessions. What a great way to extend the hobby!

The friendliness of everyone we have met in the hobby really inspired me to start modeling by assembling a freight car kit Jack Burgess gave to my

husband at one of their work sessions (See? Nice people!). I can't wait to build some kind of a structure next and, dare I say, I will try a scratchbuilt structure using some tips I learned from the "Model Railroading with Jack Burgess" series on YouTube.

Thanks to all the modelers out there for welcoming new people — especially women — into the hobby. Many thanks to you, NMRA, for bringing modelers together to celebrate the hobby! It is a hobby with something for everyone and a million ways to enjoy it. We couldn't ask for more. 🚂

2020 September **Thomas C. Draper Passes, Dedicated to NMRA**



In Memoriam: Thomas C. Draper 1942–2020

Tom Draper passed away on Sunday, July 12, at the age of 78 following a major stroke. He is survived by his wife Debbie, daughter Laura, and sons Jason and Adam. He was preceded in death by son Bradley. Tom was a long-time employee of Motorola, starting in Michigan, moving to Phoenix in 1972, which became his home base. He enjoyed assignments in Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Kuala Lumpur. He was stationed in Austin, Texas, when he retired and returned to the home base of Phoenix, Arizona.

Tom served as NMRA Treasurer from 1980 to 1998. He then returned as Treasurer from 2000 to 2008. He was the Head of the National Train Show, serving as its Director and Treasurer for many years, and was also on the Museum Committee. Tom was the long-time Treasurer of the Pacific Southeast Region and the Arizona Division, as well as a member of the Thunderbird Model Railroad Club in Phoenix. Recognition from the Association was presented in the form of the President's Award in 1983, 2002, and 2014, an Honorary Life Member (HLM) in 1999, the Distinguished Service Award (DSA) in 2007, and the Fellow of the NMRA Award in 2009.

Tom worked hard for the NMRA and played hard. Known for strong conviction and heated debate, he always had the NMRA and its best interests at heart. I met Tom in 1980, and our friendship grew as we worked and played. Tom met Debbie during our service to NMRA, and I was honored to be his best man at their wedding. One of my favorite memories of Tom was how he always ordered two beers at a time, along with an ice-filled glass and a saltshaker. At one convention, he was presented with his very own salt block. I have lost a dear friend, and the NMRA has lost one of its most devoted members.

Alan Pollock

NMRA GETS SIZABLE DONATION FROM JOHN ALLEN ESTATE

OWN A PIECE OF MODEL RAILROADING HISTORY.

***It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to own an artifact
from John Allen's Gorre & Daphetid Railroad!***

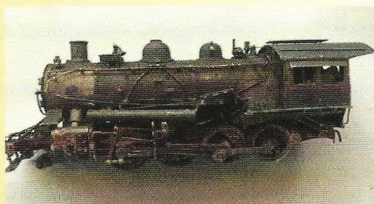
Only a very few modelers can say they've seen – much less *owned* – an artifact from John Allen's workshop or railroad. This is your chance.

On September 15, 2020, the NMRA will open an auction exclusively for NMRA members for 40 lots of these items, which range from a melted G&D locomotive to stained G&D ties. Each item will come with a Certificate of Authenticity. We've posted photos and descriptions to www.nmra.org/john-allen-auction. Members can send secret, "sealed" bids for the items, along with their NMRA membership number, to johnallenauction@nmra.org. The highest bid on each item received by 11:59pm CDT October 30 will win. Winners will be notified by email and once payment (plus shipping and handling costs) and NMRA membership are received and verified, their item(s) will be mailed to them.

All proceeds will go to the NMRA's Howell Day Museum Fund, and no NMRA dues money will be used for any part of this auction.

This opportunity will never happen again. Own a piece of model railroading history while you still can!

Shipping and handling: \$6 U.S., outside the U.S. at cost. This auction is open to active NMRA members only and membership will be verified before winners are declared. All decisions will be final and not subject to appeal. Any bid received prior to September 15, 2020, will not be recorded. Employees of the NMRA are ineligible to participate. A valid NMRA membership number must be submitted with the entrant's bid. All bids, bidder's names and winners' names will be kept private. All bids must be in U.S. dollars and must be received by 11:59pm CDT October 30, 2020. Payment information will be emailed to winners. In the event of a tie, the participants will be notified that they can choose to adjust their bid. Address all questions to johnallenauction@nmra.org; **please do not email or call NMRA Headquarters.**



Lot #39 G&D Consolidation number 27



Lot #7: Chipped G&D tunnel portal with smoke damage



Lot #8: Charred boxcar that ran on Allen's famed G&D railroad



Photo courtesy of Model Railroader magazine

These are just three of the treasures rescued from John Allen's burned basement. Visit www.nmra.org/john-allen-auction to see all the lots and descriptions!

John Allen is perhaps the most famous, most revered model railroader in the history of the hobby. His Gorre & Daphetid® Railroad set new standards for realism and operation. Then, just days after his untimely death in 1973, the G&D burned to the ground. It was believed little was recovered from the fire.

Few knew that Allen's brother gave two young neighbor boys permission to remove anything they wanted from the burned-out basement. They filled boxes with scraps, magazines, charred materials and other items. For almost five decades they jealously guarded these artifacts until finally the aging brothers got in touch with the NMRA, wanting to donate the items to benefit the Howell Day Museum and ensure their preservation.

Many of the more significant items, like the famous Gorre control panel, will become part of "The Magic of Scale Model Railroading" exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum or will be stored for the NMRA at no expense by the CSRM for a future exhibit. The remainder are offered this auction, exclusively for NMRA members.




Member Model Railroad Directory

Since we have discussed some of the benefits of your NMRA membership over the past few articles, it might be a good time to remind our members about the Model Railroad Layout Directory!

Have you ever been curious if there are NMRA member layouts near you that you could visit? Ever been on vacation and wondered if there are any layouts nearby? Ever wanted to talk to other modelers about a different scale than you're modeling or a particular prototype you're interested in? Looking for an op session, but not sure if there are any close by? These questions and more can be quickly answered right from the Members Only section of our website, www.nmra.org.

Thanks to a group of dedicated volunteers, NMRA members have access to our "Model Railroad Directory," where you can search for layouts based on location, scale, railroad, and other descriptions, as well as add your layout to the Directory (as long as it is an operating home or garden railroad). Members can even include their websites, photos, videos, and much more. Clubs are also included!

To access the Model Railroad Directory, visit www.nmra.org, login to the Members Only section of the site, click on "Member Home," and then on "Model RR Directory." Once there, you will have all the information you need to search for layouts or add your own. Who knows what you might find just down the road from you? We urge you to join in the fun and connect with your fellow NMRA members! 

Thirty or 40 years ago, the NMRA supplied all members with a printed layout directory, listing every member's layout name, along with the member's address and telephone number. (There was no such thing as email back then!) It was an invaluable resource to members who wanted to see layouts in their hometown or visit layouts while out of town. Plus, it was fun to peruse the pages to see the wide variety of railroad names and themes.

Obviously, times have changed, and personal privacy is a top-of-mind topic in 2020. We can't print and distribute the same kind of member directory because of privacy laws as we did in the mid-20th century.

That's why the Model Railroad Directory is an "opt-in" directory, rather than an "opt-out" directory. You have to choose to include your layout in the directory, rather than deciding to remove your layout from the directory.

The directory has become a much-utilized benefit of NMRA membership, and one which will help increase the fellowship and friendship NMRA members already share around the world!

THE NMRA MODEL RAILROAD DIRECTORY IS NOW **ONLINE** and **READY TO USE!**

Now whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more. And it's only available to NMRA members.

Visit www.nmra.org, click on "Member Home," then "Directory" to see layouts in your area or to list your own layout (as long as it's an operating home or garden railroad). Join in the fun!



We make it more fun!

William Raymond earned Master Model Railroader 652.

Robert Kuchler earned Master Model Railroader 653.

2020 September

AWARDS!

FROM HEADQUARTERS: 2020 NMRA HONORS (ADDENDUM)

In addition to those NMRA Honors announced in the August issue, there are some more Meritorious Service Awards (MSA) presented by the various Department Heads to recognize significant volunteer efforts at the National Department level. We congratulate these additional honorees for their selfless service to the NMRA.

The Meetings & Trade Show Department (M&TS) gratefully recognizes the organizing committee of the 2022 Birmingham, UK convention that was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its cascading impact on future events in the UK. The M&TS Department recognizes the following members for their dedication and hard work: Mike Arnold, Peter Bowen, Kathy Millatt, Mick Moignard, Patrick Grace, Ant Quinlan, Paul Jones, Chris Ibbotson, and Paul Evans.

The M&TS Department presents MSA to the organizing committee of the canceled 2020 National Convention. Although the COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation, the committee has agreed to host the 2022 convention in St. Louis, replacing the canceled UK convention. The recipients of MSA are: Jim Ables, Bob Amsler, Brad Joseph, and John Schindler.

The Legal Department is pleased to present an MSA to Chris Palermo for his ongoing work to secure and protect the NMRA's various registered trademarks. This is important work to protect some key parts of our identity and intellectual property.

The M&TS Department awards MSA to the organizers, hosts, and moderators of the NMRAx and GATEWAYx online events. These events are popular and require dedicated efforts to be successful. We recognize the following individuals with an MSA: Brad Anderson, Martyn Jenkins, Bruce Kelly, Gert "Speed" Muller, Gordon Robinson, Brooks Willig, and Bruce Wilson.

Again, we congratulate all the NMRA Honorees for the 2020 year. It is the dedicated volunteers who make it possible to bring members a wide range of benefits.

2020 October

NEIL BESOUGLOFF TRIBUTE

In Memoriam: Neil Besougloff, 1959–2020

Neil Besougloff, editor of *Model Railroader* from June 2007 to June 2017, passed away on July 26 from complications related to COVID-19. He was 61 years old.

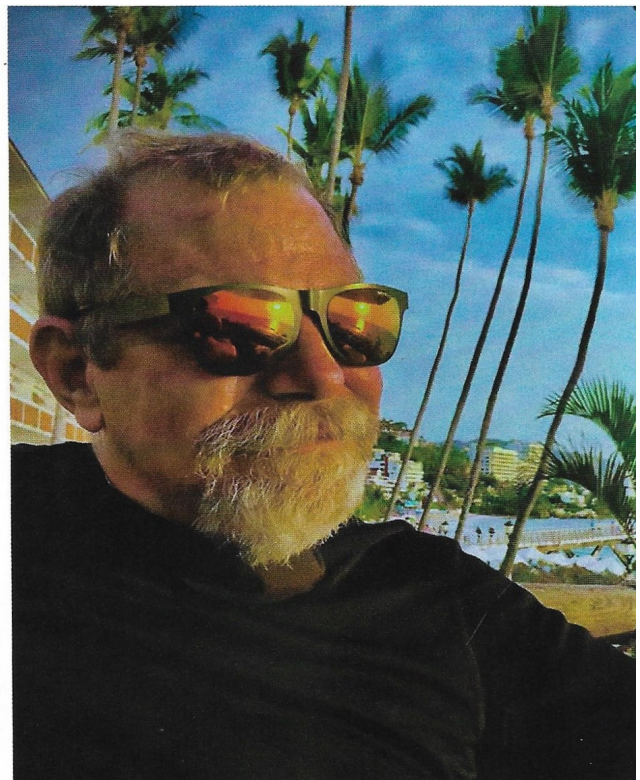
Neil was born in Toms River, New Jersey, and graduated from Toms River High School South. After earning an associate degree from Ocean County College in Toms River, he attended Flagler College in Saint Augustine, Florida, graduating in 1981 with a social sciences degree. From January 1983 to February 1997, Neil was a city and news editor at the *Bradenton* (Florida) *Herald*.

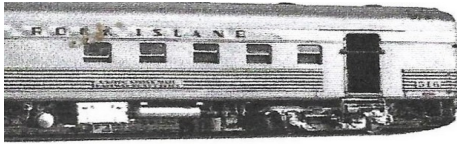
In February 1997, Neil moved to Wisconsin to become editor of MR's sister magazine, *Classic Toy Trains*. He wrote three books on the subject: *Command Control for Toy Trains*, *Command Control for Toy Trains: Second Edition*, and *Creative Toy Train Track Plans*. He built two large toy train layouts while working on the magazine and particularly enjoyed collecting tinplate-era trains.

Neil's other passion besides trains was cars. He owned a wide variety of cars from performance models such as the Mercury Marauder, Pontiac GTO, and Ford Mustang to a 1920s Ford Model A. He also was a big fan of slot car racing and enjoyed attending sports car races and the Indianapolis 500.

After retirement, Neil and his wife, Susy, moved to Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico.

Neil is survived by his wife; sons Austin and Hunter; stepsons Ricky, Michael, and Sammy; and parents, Paul and Roslyn.





Regards and keep up the good work;
I liked the article/information on John
Allen.

Alan Trammell (Life member)

In Memoriam: Marshall D. Abrams
11/7/40 – 9/12/20

On Saturday, September 12, 2020, Marshall Abrams, a long-time NMRA member, former Superintendent of the Potomac Division, and current publisher of *The Potomac Flyer* passed away. Marshall had suffered a serious heart attack several days earlier.

Marshall is survived by his wife Rochelle, his daughter Eve, and her husband Greg Schatz, and his daughter Fern, and her husband David Talmage.

Marshall was born and raised in New Jersey and received his BS from Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon University) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and his MS, and Ph.D. degrees in engineering from the University of Pittsburgh. He was a tenured professor of electrical engineering at the University of Maryland and then in the mid-1970s moved to the National Bureau of Standards (now National Institute of Standards and Technology) in Gaithersburg, Maryland. About 10 years later, he moved to the Mitre Corporation in McLean, Virginia, where he worked in the area of computer security until his retirement about two years ago.

Marshall and Rochelle loved to travel, and he would always return from a trip with photos and historical information related to the places they visited. Marshall also loved learning about new and exciting things, not only in the field of model railroading, but also in a variety of other areas that interested him.

In the late 1960s, he joined a model railroad group of other computer professionals, called the Central Potomac Union (i.e., the CPU), but when the owner of that layout moved, he said he would shortly have his own layout, and the "Abrams Railroad Empire," or ARE, soon filled part of his basement. The current ARE is the second version. When his

two daughters grew up and moved out of the home some 20 years ago, Marshall claimed the rest of the basement and a larger ARE soon filled the space used by the two girls.

He joined the NMRA in 2003, and soon became a Division Board member, and then Superintendent. In 2013 and in 2018, the Division hosted successful MER conventions, thanks to Marshall's leadership. Marshall stepped down as Superintendent at the end of 2013 and took on the position of Senior Assistant Superintendent until 2019. Marshall then volunteered to become the publisher of *The Potomac Flyer*.

Over the years, Marshall regularly contributed to *The Local* and *The Potomac Flyer* with articles ranging from installing operating crossing gates to discussing the need for insurance for your model railroad. He was also an outstanding clinician, and you could always count on Marshall providing top-notch clinics at the Regional conventions. Patient and supportive of his fellow modelers, Marshall would gladly offer help to anyone who asked for it.

Marshall also helped establish (what he liked to call) "The Anachronistic Era Operating Group." He coined the name from the fact that several of the layouts in the group were not set in any one time period. This group started operating back in the early 1970s, and is still going strong today, thanks to Marshall. It was Marshall who coordinated the group's activities and developed the schedules for hosting operations each week. The number of members has fluctuated at about a dozen, with three surviving current members dating back to the early 1970s. Although Marshall had strong opinions on politics, he established (and enforced!) the rule that politics would not be discussed by the group!

Marshall will be greatly missed, and the Division, Region, and NMRA in general, owe a great debt of gratitude to him for all he has done to promote the hobby and make it the enjoyable pastime that it is for us all.

Marshall's friends in the Anachronistic Era Operations Group: Tom Brodrick, Tony Jenkins, Brian Sheron MMR®, Bill Demas, Ken Nesper, Jerry Skeim, Gil Fuchs, Dean Ripple, and Marv Zelkowitz.

2020 October

Graham MacDonald earned Master Model Railroader 657.

Lawrence Burkholder earned Master Model Railroader 655.

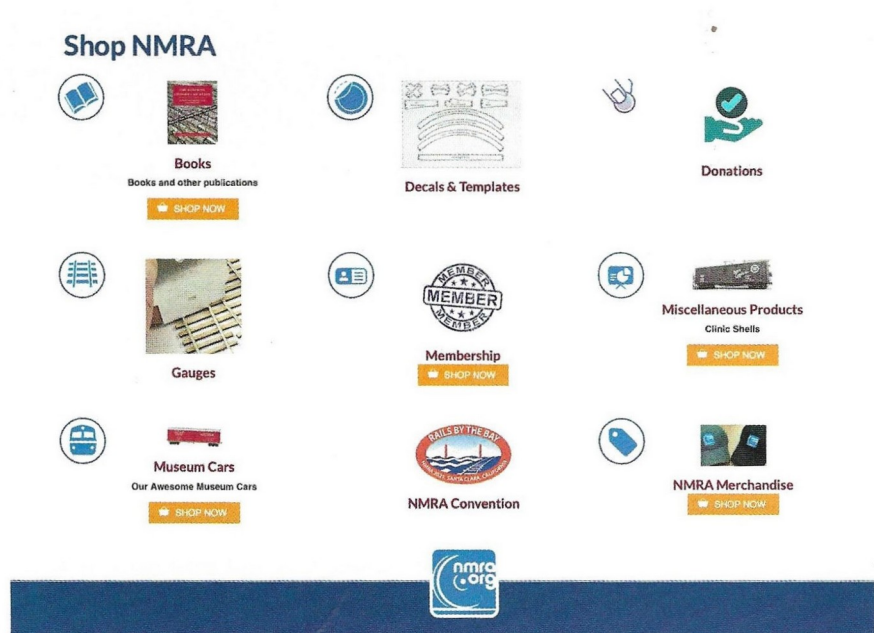
Dale Ridgeway earned Master Model Railroader 657.

2020 November

Coming Soon New NMRA Company Store

Ever since the NMRA website was completely redesigned a few years ago, we've been using an external shopping website customized for the NMRA for use with the old NMRA website. While that store got the job done, the appearance and operation were nothing like the new website, and it required creating a separate account on the store site. That Store's security system accounts were not able to be linked to the new website security system, so members had to have two accounts with the move to the members-based website.

We've been working on a new, fully integrated store with the same "look & feel" as the rest of the site. This store is also integrated with the NMRA website security, meaning when you log in with your registered NMRA account, the Store uses the information from your NMRA membership. The address information is prefilled from your profile, and any member discounts are automatically applied. Non-members can, of course, purchase items, but their information will have to be entered during the process (same ap-



plies if you don't log in before going to the Store). We expect this to improve your shopping experience!

Expect an announcement on the NMRA.org website and *NMRA eBUL-*

LETIN when the new NMRA Company Store is live. Additional articles on how to use the NMRA Company Store will be published in future issues of the *NMRA MAGAZINE*. 📱

Kenneth E. Farnham earned Master Model Railroader 658.

Charles W. Rausch earned Master Model Railroader 659.

2020 December

John Giammasi earned Master Model Railroader 656.

Mark Juett earned Master Model Railroader 660.

2021 January

Tyler Whitcomb earned Master Model Railroader 663.

2021 February JAN WESCOTT (1940-2020) TRIBUTE



Jan Wescott, one of the driving forces in the NMRA during the decade of the 2000s, passed away on Christmas Day, 2020. Her 80th birthday was less than a week away.

Wescott had spent her career in human resources at a leading hotel chain and thus had a keen interest in what made people tick. She became interested in the NMRA in the 1990s when her husband Robert built a model railroad in their Las Vegas home. Wescott was soon hosting Cajon Division meets at her house, and brought new life and energy to the Division by instituting a myriad of activities.

Her energy and enthusiasm didn't go unnoticed by NMRA National, and in the early 2000s the late John Roberts,

then NMRA president, appointed her chair of the NMRA's Education Department. In 2005, she was made chair of the Membership Services and Promotion Department (MSP) where she developed several new programs, including membership contests and the first NMRA news e-blasts, which were sent to Region Presidents and Division Superintendents. She received an Honorary Life Membership in 2009, and when the MSP Department was divided and absorbed by other departments in 2010, Wescott retired from service to the NMRA.

After her husband Robert's death, Wescott moved first to Tennessee and then to rural Alabama.

2021 February

Brook Qualman



Brook Qualman earned Master Model Railroader 665. Brook becomes our 9th lady to achieve her MMR! Congratulations!

2021 March

Scott Kremer earned Master Model Railroader 667.

Emory Luebke earned Master Model Railroader 669.

2021 April

John M. Lovely earned Master Model Railroader 662.

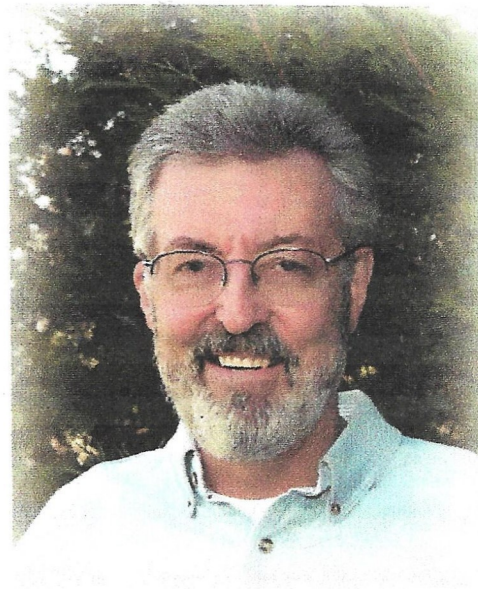
In Memoriam:
Ronald D. Morse, Sr., MMR®
October 1, 1946 to
January 12, 2021

We lost another great modeler and contributor to the hobby on January 12, 2021. Ron was born and raised in Colorado and, through his work, came to Kansas City in 1984. Ron loved

Colorado, and he frequently Jeep-trailed the mountains, mining areas, and 19th-century towns.

In model railroading, Ron inspired many persons, mentored countless others, and led the modeling community through classes he created and taught at Johnson County Community College. He was a charter (founding) member of the Turkey Creek Division of the NMRA and active creator of the large-scale modular Gold Creek Railroad. He authored more than 30 articles in *Model Railroader*, *Railroad Model Craftsman*, *NMRA BULLETIN*, *SCALE RAILS*, *NMRA MAGAZINE*, and the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*. He often contributed articles and photos to the Turkey Creek Division newsletter, the *Lightning Slinger*. He had images featured in the NMRA annual calendar, and his photography skills were featured on 15 magazine covers over the years, including the one shown here from the December 2010 *NMRA MAGAZINE*. Ron was an exceptional photographer, as seen in his clinic presentations. He even conducted classes each year on photography. In 1990, Ron achieved Master Model Railroader® #159 — a feat of which he was very proud.

In 2013, Ron and another Turkey Creek Division member, Larry Diehl, got into a seriously competitive modeling race, which fostered the concept of “Chickenman” and the fierce “Red Bull.” The challenge and fury raged on in serious mode for several years. Ron



put a “bullseye” on Diehl’s back and vowed to “ride him tight,” just like “Hot Bull’s Breath.” Diehl would not escape or “chicken out” from the heat ... and, once and for all, Diehl would be put in his rightful second place!

A very special friendship and mutual respect developed from this “fiery challenge,” and the “feud” sparked modeling interest that nearly doubled Turkey Creek member participation for several years. It fostered the “Red Bull Award” at the Turkey Creek Annual Modeling Challenge showings, as conceived and administered by fellow Turkey Creek member Larry Alfred.

Below are two images illustrating Ron’s immense modeling and photography skills. He will be missed.

2021 May

Neil Maldeis earned Master Model Railroader 670.

2021 June

Edward J. O'Rourks earned Master Model Railroader 672.

George Gaige earned Master Model Railroader 668.

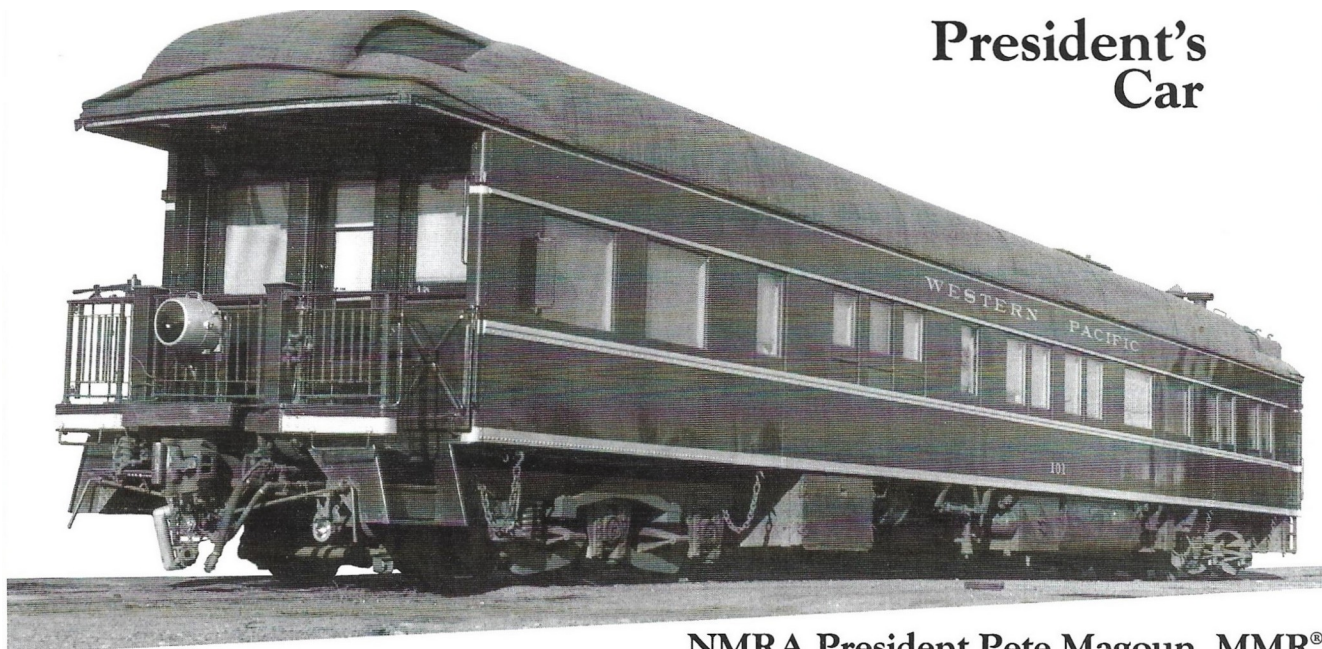
2021 July

Joseph Kavanagh earned Master Model Railroader 673.

Joe D. Fields earned Master Model Railroader 674.



2021 August Pete Magoun Out and Gordy Robinson In **Gordy is THE FIRST PRESIDENT FROM OUTSIDE THE U.S.!!!**



President's
Car

NMRA President Pete Magoun, MMR®

Hail and Farewell!

Charles Dickens opened his 1859 novel "A Tale of Two Cities" with the immortal words: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity..." and so on. I've paraphrased it here only because I have limited space. Nevertheless, it all rings true today, especially as we attempt to defeat the global COVID-19 pandemic. These are "interesting" times....

We of the NMRA have had a far better "go of it" than many on the planet, as the model railroad on the property has given us a fortress into which to retreat, relax, create, and most of all, enjoy our hobby. The ability to engage each other with technology has helped us overcome isolation and enjoy the friendships made in our Association with people from all over the planet. There's a tired old saying that "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." We certainly have, and technology has played a major part in that. The

virtual conventions put together by the NMRAX team, for instance, have allowed us to observe, learn, and interact with the same sorts of presentations we'd get in person. And this use of technology to overcome adversity has moved into Region and Division life as well, which is fabulous. Learning on the fly, so to speak, will benefit us down the road when the storms and icy roads show up in our areas, forcing us to cancel in-person activities. Instead of moping all day, we can now be up and operating in just a few minutes. Life is good.

And circumstances being what they are, this is my final "Pandemic Positives" offering. It's been an honor to lead our Association over the last three years, although like the rest of us, I could have done without the challenges presented by the pandemic. I am extraordinarily proud of the NMRA team of volunteers and HQ staff who have kept us running and have improved our Association over the past few years. We're in strong financial shape right

now, we are working well with various industry groups across the globe, and we're looking at numerous improvements in manufacturer offerings to the hobby. Our volunteers have put in countless hours on our behalf, and we owe every one of them a huge "Thank You" for their efforts. There are so many that trying to make individual callouts will take the entire magazine, so let's say a global "Thanks" to those who have improved our Association through their efforts.

A new day is dawning, and with the sunrise will come a new leadership team, ready to carry on and continue to improve our Association. We're headed into the division point for the crew change as I write this in mid-June, and... yes... I see Gordy Robinson, MMR® on the platform ready to board. Let's hear what he has to say.

I take the reins from Pete at a time when world events over the last 18 months have taken their toll on many,

2021 August Pete Magoun Out and Gordy Robinson In Cont.

but our hobby has seen an unprecedented boom in many areas. Much of the evidence of this boom is anecdotal, but Märklin, the German manufacturer, announced a 70 percent year-on-year growth in sales for November 2020; Hornby announced sales were up by at least 30 percent, putting the company back into profit after several lean years; Peco found it difficult to keep up with demand, and we all clearly know how the market is booming from our own evidence, as supplies of many products were sold as fast as the manufacturers could get them out for sale.

Historically, the model railroad-ing market has been one of peaks and troughs, typically following the First World's economic growth and decline, but in monetary terms, *averaging* between 2 and 3 percent growth year on year. The standardization of practices, led by the NMRA, remains an achievement of which we as NMRA members should all be proud.

But (there is always a "but," isn't there), membership of the NMRA has continued to fall, even amid these halcyon days of growth in the hobby generally. Why has this fall taken place? There are probably a range of reasons, and I am sure most of us can probably think of at least one. But added together, it seems the perception is the NMRA has become less relevant to the average modeler. I emphasize the word "perception," as perception seems to be the new reality of life. In fact, the NMRA is as good as it ever was, with a massive range of facilities, benefits, and a fellowship that is astounding to most of us who actually take part. This year, the volume of virtual material and broadcasts such as NMRAx has seen that fellowship become truly international, with many of us having made

friends, and very good friends, on the net from around the world. The annual in-person National Convention is always good for starting and fostering international cooperation and friendship, but the virtual world has, in the past 18 months, expanded that by an order of magnitude.

So how do we alter this perception and halt the decline in membership? Certainly not by getting rid of anything we do now. The NMRA is already good; what we need to do is make it better. We need to make it more relevant, especially to the host of new modelers out there, and above all, improve the perception of what the NMRA actually is.

As President, can I do that? Can the BoD do that? Well, no. I am not the NMRA. *You* are. Each individual one of us is the NMRA. Every single member is an ambassador for the NMRA. Together we are a team: Team NMRA. Together, we can move mountains. Together, we can do it all.

Help me make the NMRA the organization you want it to be. Volunteer, and let me know what you want and what we can do together to help to achieve that.

Become part of the team.

TEAM NMRA.

Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Well said, sir! And with that, I'm off. Best wishes as you move us forward!

Right away, Mr. Robinson!
High green!



2021 August

Harold Russell, MMR 14 has an Award named in his honor!

Douglas Harding earned Master Model Railroader 676.

Jim Osborne earned Master Model Railroader 677.

2021 September

Gordy Robinson President's Report

Changing Seasons and a Changing NMRA

Soon the nights are going to start to draw in, and no doubt if there are any trees where you live, the leaves will soon be starting to change. Fall is a favorite season for many with the return of cooler air, bright colors, and the prospect of seeing more of the basement for another happy modeling season.

As I write this, I reflect on the very recent changes within our National team, with many familiar faces leaving and new ones stepping forward to serve the organization. I didn't want to dedicate a whole column to welcoming everyone but, it's important to me they all get a wee mention here. So (deep breath), in July, we welcomed three new National directors: Chris Palermo as North America At-Large Director, John Doehring as Eastern District Director, and Martyn Jenkins as At-Large Worldwide Director. Rick Coble took the reins as Vice President, Mike Cummings as Secretary, and Royal Bruce as Assistant Secretary. I have also appointed Gert "Speed" Muller as IT Manager, Michael Hohn, MMR® as Head of Education, Riley Triggs as Head of Publications, and Pete Steinmetz as Head of Standards & Conformance. Finally, at committee lev-

el, Pat McCarthy becomes the head of the National Nominations Committee, and Mike Brestel will lead our Awards Committee.

This may sound like a large National team; however, we are still short of volunteers in all departments, so please, if you feel you have skills and time to offer, get in touch with the relevant department head.

It may be a distant memory now, but we held our second virtual NMRA National Convention with 603 attendees in July. The Rails By The Bay team are to be commended for taking the learnings from previous virtual events and making an event with their own flavor. There were the usual clinic channels, but taking an idea from the Australian and PCR Region virtual conventions, the group provided a social space called "The Grand Hall," with topic-specific breakout rooms. It was a great effort by all the volunteers on behalf of NMRA members and model railroaders, and I am grateful to each and every one of them.

The Grand Hall and breakout rooms did a great job of replicating the hallway conversations and networking that, for me, is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the National

Convention. I held two "ask the president" breakout sessions with more than 170 in attendance across both sessions. There were some great questions from the participants on a broad range of topics. It was an opportunity, probably for the first time, to have so many members interact with a National officer, with no question being off the table. I enjoyed the discussion of the entry of Lego models to the National Contest. While there is nothing to stop anyone from entering such a model, working through the scoring matrix with those present showed how hard it would be to achieve a merit award.

A great deal my discussions dealt with the future of virtual events and the various potential models for their delivery. My personal view — and that of the vast majority of those present — was that hybrid events where attendees are both in-person and virtual are beyond our current capabilities. However, clinicians who are remote and presenting to in-person events is something we have seen being done before COVID, and I think this will continue in a post-COVID world. The discussion also moved to future NMRA virtual conventions. It'll be no surprise to you I am very supportive of virtual events being a legacy

Gordy Robinson President's Report Cont.

of the past 20 months. The NER has already decided going forward it will hold two conventions per year: one in-person and one virtual.

Certainly, our organization must recognize that when we return to in-person meetings and events when safely possible to do so, we must continue to reach model railroaders who can only interact with our online activities. We are well on the journey toward an organization that can provide both in-person and virtual events. The challenge we face is to do this sustainably once we all return to in-person meetings.

Finally, to round off this month's ramble, let me update you on some of the discussions and decisions at the summer Board of Directors meeting. The full minutes of the meeting are available on the NMRA website, but here are some of the highlights. Earlier in 2021, Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Director Robert Weinheimer, MMR[®] facilitated working sessions with most of our Region presidents, and the RAC is now working hard to implement the Board's long-range plan 2025. A long-awaited update to the Executive Handbook is being led by CFO Frank Koch and will be reviewed by the BoD section-by-section over the coming months. Unfortunately, we, along with several other organizations, have seen a continued decline in membership throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic. It is vital that we make every effort to connect with all members, especially during these difficult times, to encourage them to remain a part of the team.

On to new business and one of the most important topics for a lot of our members: Is the NMRA going to produce a digital *NMRA MAGAZINE*? While there was no motion laid before the BoD at this meeting, conversations on this top-

ic have now moved to investigate the how, rather than if, the NMRA might publish both a paper and digital magazine. A survey of members in April 2021, which received more than 1,500 responses, showed that 95 percent of respondents were for the NMRA producing a magazine in either format, with 37 percent preferring a paper magazine but 54 percent preferring either digital-only or a combined paper and digital subscription. I know you may be thinking this survey, being undertaken online, had a bias toward younger members, but 85 percent of respondents told us they were over 60.

What does this mean for next steps? The BoD has asked for tactical solutions to be presented by or before the next meeting, exploring the options and subscription models for a digital magazine alongside the current paper *NMRA MAGAZINE*. The Directors want to establish our future direction at or before their winter 2022 meeting and see the preferred model for a digital magazine implement soon after. I have, therefore, established a small working group comprised of the CFO, At-Large Worldwide Director, Head of Publications, and me to seek out those options, obtain the opinions of members, and feedback to the BoD ahead of their next meeting.

So, as usual for the NMRA, quite a lot of things are happening at all levels; despite the challenges we face, together Team NMRA always keeps the trains moving.

In the meantime, remember:

We are all part of Team NMRA!



2021 September

Ted Stephens earned Master Model Railroader 679.

Gordy Robinson earned Master Model Railroader 680.

Chuck Diljak earned Master Model Railroader 682.

2021 October

Special (Addition) Edition

As many astute readers no doubt have already noticed by merely picking up the magazine, this issue seems different — heavier — and it's not because of the steam locomotive cover photo and its corresponding “hefty” article. Just before I put the September issue to press, I informed several newly minted Master Model Railroaders® that their write-ups might not appear in the magazine for a few *months*. Why? I had received a whopping double-digit number of MMR® bios for the *BULLETIN* section that month (and was informed of three more on the way!). Typically, a single issue will support two to three (rarely four) of these articles, depending on the number of words (for which there is no limit). Increased participation in the Achievement Program is fantastic; the bounty of bios, however, posed a space challenge.

My goal has always been to allow everyone who earns the uniquely NMRA Master Model Railroader® certification to have their full story told, and that is why I do not set a word limit. Everyone's journey is unique, and I want those who worked for this prestigious award to have their modeling journeys preserved within the magazine's pages. And as every author knows, once a publication accepts your text and photos, you can't wait to see it in print — I imagine the feeling is even more so for the MMRs®.

I copied my message to several NMRA officials, who, without hesitation, decided to expand this issue to accommodate the numerous bios and fulfill the NMRA's mission; hence, a 72-page special, if you will.

Observation Car

NMRA Magazine Editor Cinthia Priest

As always, as I read through the numerous MMR® stories, I couldn't help but think about how great this hobby is. We all have a common interest (model trains), yet our approach is as diverse as we are. Some model steam, others diesel, still others traction or other motive power. Some have “monster” basement layouts; others enjoy switching shelf layouts. Some enjoy collecting. Then think about all the different scales, locations, eras, operational schemes (or lack thereof), and on and on. It really is a multi-faceted hobby.

Another common experience we all have is time. Everyone receives the same 24 hours each day, but — wow — how differently we leverage that gift. Understandably, various stages of life determine the ratios dedicated to certain activities. Still, even taking that into account, no two persons spend time in the exact same way, let alone at precisely the same time. Even when a group participates in a shared activity, like a board game, a business meeting, or a convention, each person's thoughts, perceptions, and impressions of that activity are as unique as the individual — mind-blowing!

My conclusion: building a layout, amassing a fleet, signaling a model railroad, kitbashing a steam locomotive, writing an article, achieving Master Model Railroader®, and so forth are the result of combining the love of trains with judicious use of time.

Now *that's* heavy.



The Following page contains the Master Model Railroaders that are listed in the 2021 October Bulletin.

This is THE RECORD of ALL-TIME (thus far) as EIGHT (8) Master Model Railroader Biographies were published.

2021 October THE RECORD!!! 8 MMRs Listed in One Month

Jonathan A. Chisholm earned Master Model Railroader 675.

James C. Demarco earned Master Model Railroader 678.

Gary D. Loiselle earned Master Model Railroader 681.

Frank Baker earned Master Model Railroader 683.

David Sydney earned Master Model Railroader 684.

Alex Belida earned Master Model Railroader 685.

Max Magliaro earned Master Model Railroader 686.

Ken Nelson earned Master Model Railroader 688.



2021 MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

The following have been identified by one of the NMRA Departments to receive a Meritorious Service Award (MSA) for their contributions to the NMRA. These recommendations were submitted in late 2020 for consideration for the 2021 Honors.

ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT

Lee Stoermer — 12 Years providing outstanding support to members & staff as NMRA 100% Club Coordinator/Liaison.

Ben Sevier — 9 Years providing outstanding Technical Support to members, staff and volunteers as NMRA IT Manager. Countless hours training staff and developing systems for HQ.

Frank Koch, HLM — 12 Years providing insight and support for members, staff and volunteers as NMRA CFO, Museum CFO, HQ Advisor & Oversight as well as numerous committee positions over the years.

Michael Brestel, HLM — Decades providing support for members, staff and volunteers as Historian, Presidential Advisor, HQ Advisor, Insurance Coordinator, Calendar Coordinator, Museum BOD, & numerous committees, as well as multiple executive positions over the years.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Michael Hohn, MMR® — Valuable Contribution to the Beginners' Guide on the NMRA website. He served as co-editor providing outstanding contributions.

John Stevens — 15 Years as NMRA National Scout Coordinator. Responsible for growth and instrumental in helping Scouts earn their Railroading Merit Badge.

Dave Chance — AP Committee of the Education Department as the Mid-Eastern Region AP Manager. Outstanding efforts during a very challenging year.

Gerry Hopkins, MMR® — AP Committee of the Education Department as the Australasian Region AP Manager. Outstanding efforts during a very challenging year.

Harley "Skip" Luyk, MMR® — AP Committee of the Education Department as the North Central Region AP Manager. Outstanding efforts during a very challenging year.

MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Pam Simpson-Moleski — Social Media Management. Instrumental in moderating and maintaining Facebook. Growing and sharing the NMRA, assisting with NMRAx events and graphics creation. Social Media was especially important this past year, and Pam knocked it out of the park.

2021 NMRA FELLOW AWARD

The following three individuals have been identified by the Honors Committee to receive the NMRA Fellow Award for their significant and long-term service to the NMRA and the hobby. These recommendations were submitted in late 2020 for consideration for the 2021 Honors.

Robert Brown, HLM, MMR® & Charles Getz, HLM — In most current NMRA members' memory, it would be difficult to identify precisely when Charlie Getz came on the leadership scene. Still, none would have any difficulty identifying the lasting impact he has made on the Association. Charlie has served continuously in national leadership since the early 2000s with service as PCR Trustee, At-Large North American Director, and NMRA President. Charlie mentored the Association through the major reorganization in 2006 and was the primary author of the NMRA Regulations and Executive Handbook that has served as the guiding documents for the Association.

Bob Brown's influence has been more in the publishing world of the influential *Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette*. Bob has been the most influential person to identify and secure historically significant and important model railroad artifacts for the CSRM exhibit. His aesthetic and literary skills have helped craft a world-class exhibit to showcase the hobby and the NMRA.

Charlie and Bob are the driving force for the Gallery Exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Through their contacts and relationships, major funding for the project was raised, and agreements with California were reached. Outside the NMRA, Charlie has, for more than forty years, written a continuing column for the *Gazette*. Charlie's reports on innumerable models he has constructed have been a mainstay for *Gazette* readers.

Charlie Getz, HLM and Bob Brown, HLM, MMR®, are the epitome of and deserving of formal recognition as NMRA Fellows.

Gerry Leone, HLM, MMR® — Over the past 15 years, virtually every positive outcome of an NMRA program or enhancement to member benefits has had Gerry Leone's name attached to the outcome. He is the originator and continuing editor of *NMRA eBULLETIN*, the single most essential communications advancement for the Association in the last ten years. He is the driving force for the creation and expansion of the NMRA Partnership Program. Gerry was responsible for the efforts that brought a professional marketing consultant to NMRA. Gerry instituted the videotaping of clinics at the National Convention and their posting on the NMRA web site as an educational benefit. Seeing a need for improved public communications, Gerry produced, filmed, and edited the "Welcome to Model Railroading" video that is a mainstay of recruiting and relations today. He then followed up with a multi-part video series about the national convention and the National Train Show to help members decide to attend those

WE CONGRATULATE ALL THE 2021 AWARD RECIPIENTS.

events. Most recently, Gerry has been instrumental in organizing and bringing to life *NMRA TURNTABLE*.

Gerry also found time to be a national association leader, serving as Communication Director and Vice President Special Operations with all those efforts. He has been a mainstay in his home Region and Division. Gerry seems to be everywhere, getting positive results for the membership.

Gerry Leone, MMR, HLM, has undoubtedly earned and is fully deserving recognition as NMRA Fellow.

2021 NMRA HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

The following individuals have been identified by the Honors Committee to receive the NMRA Honorary Life Member recognition for their long-standing and consistent service to the NMRA at the highest level and impact. These recommendations were submitted in late 2020 for consideration for the 2021 Honors.

Ray DeBlieck — has been a stalwart leader within the NMRA for many years, serving on the BOD through the organization's transition years. He has been the Convention Committee Chair for the National Conventions for more than fifteen years, bringing a vast amount of knowledge and experience in managing the complexity of a National Convention to each new year and its unique set of challenges. In every case, he has brought a positive experience to most of the attendees and helped ensure each convention was successful.

Fred Headon, MMR® — It is my honor, privilege, and distinct pleasure to nominate Fred Headon for the award of

Honorary Life Member on the basis of his long-term volunteer and elective service to the NMRA and to the hobby of model railroading.

Currently finishing a tour as Lead Director, Fred will be leaving the Board at the Summer 2020 Director's caucus due to term limits. Appointed to fill an unexpected Board vacancy in 2012, elected to the position and then re-elected, Fred has served on the NMRA Board of Directors for eight years. In 2017 the Board chose him to be the Lead Director, a position he has filled admirably since then.

He has been instrumental in developing a Director's Handbook for new Directors and has mentored several as they joined the NMRA Board. His sage advice and counsel have been invaluable to me over the years.

Fred has been a member of the Thousand Lakes Region since he joined the NMRA in 1975, has served on the TLR Board, several Region and National Convention committees, as a Region and National contest judge for many years, and as an instructor for the highly rated "Modeling With the Masters" programs at many National conventions. He was active in the TLR No.1 Northern Division reorganization in 2008 and is currently active in the Division's Free-Mo modular group.

Fred is the first recipient of the TLR's annual "Stafford Swain Lifetime Achievement Award" for service to his Division, Region and the hobby. I cannot think of a more deserving recipient for an HLM. In addition to the NMRA, his commitment to the Canadian Pacific Railway Historical Association is manifested in his position as editor of their Soo Line section of their "CP Tracks" magazine. He has also been an advisor to various hobby manufacturers seeking to provide accurate CP equipment for the hobby.

2021 November

Kelly Russell earned Master Model Railroader 689.

Dale Bearden earned Master Model Railroader 690.

2022 January

What Director Candidates Should Bring to the Table

Article by Tony Koester

An organization like ours that depends on volunteers for virtually everything where the steel wheel meets the rail is in a precarious position. On the one hand, we are in a beggars-can't-be-choosers position where we have to be grateful that anyone is willing to give up some of his or her precious leisure time to support the organization. Conversely, we need to enlist people who have the professional and interpersonal skills required to manage a million-dollar-plus corporation.

We hear a lot about how the hobby is aging, and this offers more than a glimmer of hope for resolving this apparent dilemma. We have in our midst a cadre of retired or soon-to-be retiring professionals in a plethora of fields who can benefit our Association. So, at first glance, one would think we're well-positioned to handle almost any problem our Association is facing, be it technical, financial, human resources, governmental, or whatever. But there are many indications that this simply is not the case.

And I think I know why. It's a matter of well-intentioned folks getting elected without having a well-considered and realistic agenda.

I served on the Board of Directors for two three-year terms plus an initial two-year term when we changed from the unwieldy Trustee arrangement to the present Board of Directors structure. I was asked to run for the office of At-large Director Worldwide, gave it some serious thought, and agreed to do that.

Why I agreed is what's important. For a considerable part of my professional career, I've been a model railroad magazine editor. For whatever reasons, we editors are treated very kindly by our fellow modelers wherever we go. My concern was that I would be elected purely on name recognition rather than merit, so before I agreed to run, I thought about what value I could bring to the table.

I was elected, and I think name recognition did play a major role in that, so the burden was now on me to earn my

place on the Board. I joined the NMRA in 1966 and had been a member continuously since 1969 (there was a brief break when I moved from Indiana to New Jersey), so I understood the workings of the organization reasonably well. The National officers were all good friends, and I respected their views. But the Association still looked much like it had since 1935.

I felt we needed a fresh face; too many younger folks wondered what the "wrench and spoked wheel" thing was. I also believed we weren't using our name as a brand. Our magazine had evolved from a newsletter-like-name "Bulletin" to *SCALE RAILS* in a poorly thought-out plan to sell it on newsstands and in hobby shops, which generated considerable ill will with both major publishers. This move resulted in decreased coverage of the NMRA contest in their pages, full-color photos that had amounted to tens of thousands of dollars of free advertising for the NMRA.

So my agenda included the fact that we needed a bright new logo that shouted "NMRA" in bold letters with no anachronistic overtones such as a steam engine's driver that also reflected our brand: NMRA and nmra.org, which we introduced at the 50th Anniversary convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Also on my agenda was the renaming of our publication to *NMRA MAGAZINE* — after all, that's what the AARP does with its magazine, which has a circulation in the millions!

The obvious lesson here is that when you decide to run for our National Board of Directors, it's not nearly enough to say you used to do and be this and that. You need to have an action plan, an agenda, a punch list of items that you feel the NMRA needs to sustain itself and even to grow into the 21st century. So what I want to read in your Statement of Candidacy is that you do or used to do this, and therefore you're qualified to help the NMRA do *that*, and here's why *that* is important.

When you're elected, work your tail off to get *that* done. It took me three years (one full term) to win Board approval for the new logo and magazine name, by the way. Big ideas take time to prepare, present, digest, and get approved.

Not all of your grand ideas will come to fruition. One of mine was to compensate clinicians at National Conventions, either with free registrations or perhaps a comp room night or two. The wise old heads quickly ran the numbers for me that proved we'd have to double the registration fees to make that possible. Motion failed. Next item.

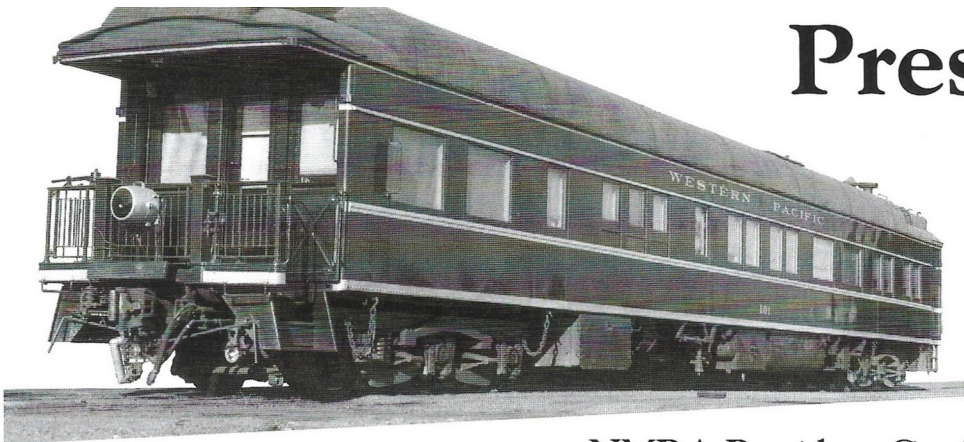
Not a single Director should come to a Board meeting without at least one item on his or her Bucket List that he/she fully intends to see enacted at that meeting, or at least to get the process started. Current Directors need to make it their goal to own an issue and see it through to completion. I understand that President Gordy Robinson is keeping a checklist with names and action items reflecting these objectives. Candidates for a Director position need to understand that he will expect them to become contributing members of the leadership team with fresh ideas that will help to move our Association forward.

A good Board meeting, like an election, is a form of competition. The best ideas win. But if there aren't great ideas to choose from, everyone loses. 🗳️



2022 January Steve Miazga earned Master Model Railroader 692.

2022 February NMRA Magazine to be offered On-Line



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Running Extra

Traditionally, your Board of Directors has met in person twice a year, and all business has had to wait for those meetings in February or summer before being concluded or moved forward. Having the Directors always on the extra board and with online meetings now being the norm rather than the exception for conducting business in the NMRA, I took the opportunity in October to call an additional Board of Directors meeting in early December 2021. Doing so allowed business to continue to move forward rather than stalling for nearly three months, waiting for the winter meeting to come around.

This month's column will cover the updates from the decisions made during that meeting. By the time you read this, we'll be preparing for the winter 2022 board meeting, which will be held virtually for the safety of all. Your directors had five motions before them and some updates on the items that will come before them at the upcoming winter and summer meetings.

Member recognition was the first motion. For many years, we have provided certificates to recognize those who have been members for 25 and 50 years. Whilst we can all agree that recognizing the contribution you all bring to the

organization is something within the leadership we are constantly striving to do, we need to recognize the milestones of membership. Therefore, it has been adopted by the board of directors that US and worldwide members will be recognized with a certificate for reaching 2, 5, and 10 years of membership in addition to the current 25- and 50-year recognition. The Australasian, British, and European Regions and NMRA Canada will similarly match this recognition, introducing their own certificates on the same milestone cadence as in the USA.

Motion 2 was the bi-annual review of the US and worldwide member dues. Every two years, the board is asked to review the dues charged to members; any increase is tied to the consumer price index movement since the last review. Whilst during 2021 the amount of inflation in the USA has increased significantly, looking at this over the 22-month period reduces the size of the potential increase for members, although an increase is inevitable. Therefore, the dues will increase from \$50/year to \$54/year starting April 1, 2022. No one likes to make increases to costs, especially at a time when everything else is also increasing in costs. Still, for us to have a sustainable organization, increases are necessary. For members

in Australasian, British, and European Regions and NMRA Canada, any increase in dues for you will be notified locally; having reviewed the ABCE fee in 2021, this will not be reviewed again until 2023.

Next up was the audit of the financial accounts for 2020, an item that wasn't available for the summer 2021 board meeting. The NMRA once again came through this process with no issues noted by the auditor and all aspects being in compliance. Did you know that, thanks to the efforts of the Finance and Admin departments, the NMRA is held up as an example by our auditors for other 501(c)(3) organizations? This is a credit to their hard work and diligence in the management of the day-to-day operations of the organization. The NMRA IRS form 990 for 2020 has been posted onto the NMRA website, and the Auditor's Report has been added to the Members Only section.

The meeting then turned to an update from the Digital Publishing Project being led by Riley Triggs, who joined as Head of the Publications Department in July 2021. This project, overseen by the At-Large Worldwide Director Martyn Jenkins and myself, is charged with finding ways to add digital publications in addition to (rather than to replace)

our print publications, starting with digitizing our *NMRA MAGAZINE*. Over the past few months, the team has been consulting with members, publishers, and suppliers. You may well have seen the surveys that have gone out to members in spring and fall of 2021. With 75 percent of the respondents indicating the NMRA should offer a digital magazine, Riley updated the board on the progress to date and asked for their decision with respect to next steps.

Having carried out thorough evaluations, the team has recommended the digital magazine be made available to all members as part of the membership fee, with the additional subscription for the print magazine to remain available to all members. Following member feedback that the example magazine produced using PDF Flip was too slow, clunky, and feature-light, the project team looked at third-party hosting solutions, selecting Zinio as the preferred supplier. The team has not elected to offer the *NMRA MAGAZINE* as part of Zinio's marketplace app, as other publishers may have done. Rather, it has decided to host our own NMRA-branded web application using Zinio's application under the hood and also launch an NMRA mobile app in Summer 2022, which will provide a host of features and enhanced mobile readability as compared to viewing on a mobile device through a web browser. The Zinio application will allow viewing of full PDF pages, dynamic flipping from landscape to portrait views, text-only viewing to read an article as you would a book, offline viewing using a browser extension of the NMRA mobile app, and handheld-specific flowable text and video. The Zinio product will also allow you to manipulate the view of a page or article and then print it out to keep at home. If, like me,

you want to blow up the plans from within an article and keep them for future projects, you'll be able to do this without losing definition, as can be the case when copying or enlarging from paper.

This decision means there will be a new dues structure, which includes the digital magazine with the option to add a print subscription at a reduced price compared to the current subscription. With the CPI-E imposed dues increase, this means that a subscription including the digital magazine will be \$68 for a regular member from April 2022, with the current membership with print magazine costing \$82, representing a savings of \$14 for members. If you still want to receive the print *NMRA MAGAZINE*, you can do so for \$20 per year, plus shipping to your home address. Increases will come into effect April 1, 2022, for any renewal or new membership term started on or after that date, which means if you are on multi-year membership, the increase will not be reflected until that expires, although you will have access to the digital *NMRA MAGAZINE* starting April 1, 2022. Railpass and Student members will now only receive the digital magazine. Life members will continue to receive the print magazine and the digital magazine.

I'm out of time and space, but there is just time left to pause to remember Paul Richardson, MMR®, previous NMRA National Achievement Program Chair, who passed in November 2021, and in whose memory the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be "GORDY" in a stylized, cursive font, followed by "MMR" in a more blocky, uppercase font.

2022 February

Michael Ross earned Master Model Railroader 694.

2022 March

Mick Moignard earned Master Model Railroader 693.

Bob Ginger earned Master Model Railroader 695.

2022 April

PAUL RICHARDSON PASSES (Paul on right below)

In Memoriam: Paul Richardson, MMR®

Paul Richardson, MMR®, was a good friend to many within our hobby. Paul lived about three miles from me. When he and Betty bought their current house, Paul contacted me by phone, having found another NMRA member living close by. He and MMR® Paul Myers (known around our Division as “the brothers Paul”) helped me in the early construction stages of my Louisville & Nashville LCL sub. He and Paul Myers were also instrumental in getting me involved in the Achievement Program. Both were always willing to help other model railroaders in just about every aspect of our hobby.

I spent more time with Paul before he passed on November 17, 2021. He was having a good day on my last visit, and we talked a lot about many subjects, but mostly model railroading and the NMRA. Paul had been battling cancer and several other health problems for several years.



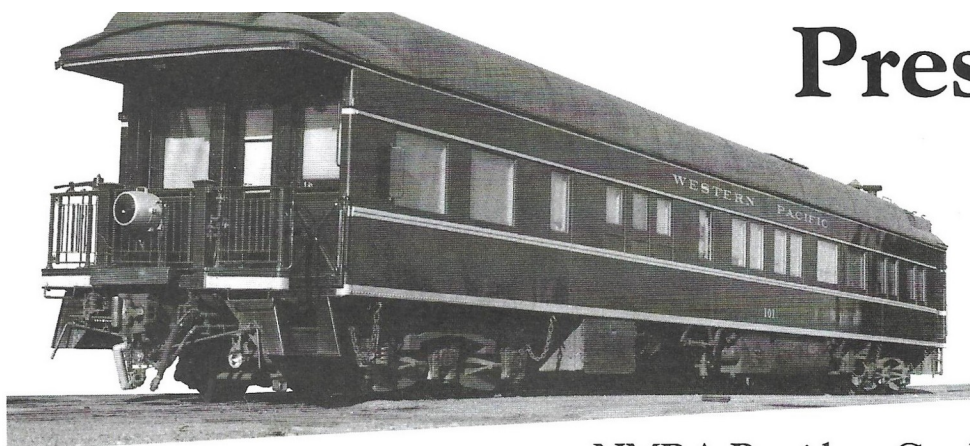
Paul Richardson was AP Manager for many years, served as Turkey Creek Division Superintendent, and filled many other positions supporting the hobby. He will be greatly missed by all, especially for his sense of humor. A bit of Paul lives on in many of us whom he befriended and

mentored. The model railroad tradition is carried on by his son Duane Richardson, MMR®, and his grandson Rob, who helped Paul on his last model railroad. A portion of that railroad now resides with Rob.

— Mark Juett, MMR®

2022 April

Malcolm Houck earned Master Model Railroader 696.



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Central “Perks”

In her February 2022 editorial, *NMRA MAGAZINE* editor Cinthia Priest spoke of her choice of “expand” as her theme word for 2022. You all already know about the NMRA’s efforts to expand our digital presence, increase membership, and offer more perks for belonging. Perhaps you would like to learn more about our efforts to expand these perks.

It would be remiss of me not to talk about what we need to deliver those perks. First, perks require resources — financial and physical (volunteers). Many of you volunteer hundreds of hours each year to the NMRA, and we thank you for your service. For the NMRA to offer more perks, we need additional people to help make dreams become a reality. Making any new project a reality requires us to stop something we already do, put pressure on our existing volunteers, or grow our team. I think we can all agree that option one isn’t really one we want to see; unless there is a strong case to support it, we don’t plan to stop anything we do today. Applying pressure simply results in suffering in two forms: volunteers burn themselves out or, worse, walk away, leaving other areas, and/or projects to suffer from a lack of attention. That only leaves us with one option: grow our team, which is our number one priority for all departments of the NMRA.

We need volunteers who have anything from ad-hoc to regular weekly time to give to the NMRA. We can provide full training to our volunteers with a varying range of technical and non-technical skills (just like anything in model railroading). Since the beginning of the year, we have started advertising for specific volunteer roles in our various national departments using the *NMRA E-BULLETIN*. All members who are registered for the NMRA website or who have an up-to-date email address on file with NMRA headquarters will receive our digital publications, which have expanded to include the *NMRA TURNTABLE*, *NMRA E-BULLETIN*, *NMRA DISPATCH*, and *NMRA MAGAZINE*. Lots of projects are planned for this year and next year, but we need volunteers for both business-as-usual tasks and projects.

Departments in urgent need of help for business as usual include Meetings & Trade Shows, Standards & Conformance, the Howell Day Museum (HDM) Committee, and Fundraising. Roles for those departments will be shared in the *NMRA E-BULLETIN*, but you don’t need to wait — you can contact the department heads directly using the contact information contained within the *NMRA MAGAZINE* (page 52 of this issue).

Okay, here’s the promised peek into some projects in the works. My virtual travels (via Zoom meetings) around the NMRA at the end of February included 21 Divisions in 11 Regions. I heard loud and clear that while Facebook is very popular with a lot of members and model railroaders, a portion of members want a space for NMRA members to communicate outside social media. The NMRA has multiple National, Regional, Divisional, and Special Interest Facebook Groups — the largest, by far, is the NMRA Community Group with 21,400 members. However, these forums are open to anyone, not just NMRA members, and, unfortunately, outside political influences have turned a number of people away from social media.

A second issue we need to address falls into the resource category. Several Divisions have found audio-visual platforms allowed them to communicate during the pandemic and add meetings or events for their members. If all 150 NMRA Divisions in North America purchase a license for meeting software, that bill will run into the tens of thousands. Such a license may be affordable for a larger Division or may be gifted by a member. Still, having seen the benefit to our members from online networking during the pandemic, National should and can help with this.

2022 April President's Car Cont.

NMRA National is developing the "NMRA Interchange" to help with these two issues and broaden the opportunity for members to connect, hold meetings, and communicate with other members. The NMRA Interchange will have areas for all NMRA members to share ideas using text or meeting in audio-visual hang-out rooms. The audio-visual rooms will allow up to 25 people to share the space on camera (up to 200 participants can join *without* video). You can share your screen and do everything you can do in other meeting platforms with no time limits.

In addition to the areas for all members, we'll be creating space for each Region, Division, and 100% NMRA Club to add text and voice channels that are private spaces for their members. Members will be able to join the NMRA Interchange from the members-only area of the NMRA website. Once registered, members can download a desktop and mobile app to stay connected wherever they are and whatever they are doing. We'll be keeping this space just for NMRA members. When you first register, you'll select your Region and Division, giving you access to their private spaces.

The NMRA Interchange will be available to all members as a member "perk," using Cinthia's term,

but I think it's also a perk for all our Divisions to benefit from as we rebuild after the pandemic. The NMRA Interchange is now in the pilot phase and being tested by a small number of Divisions. This summer, we'll launch the NMRA Interchange for all members at the National Train Show in St. Louis, Missouri. A big note of thanks must go to Jordan Kramer of MCR Division 7 and our IT department for making the NMRA Interchange possible.

We are also working on a major project in the Education department, which will need volunteers with experience teaching, creating education courses and material, administration, and project management. That project is very early in its development, but we hope to launch it in early 2023. A few other perks here now or coming to our members soon include uploading all pre-1978 editions of the *NMRA BULLETIN* to the NMRA website, new beginner guides updated for 2022, and our recruitment and retention digital toolkit.

Okay, I am out of space and need to get back to "expanding"...

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordy MMR". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Gordy" written in a cursive-like script and "MMR" in a more blocky, capital-letter style.

2022 May

Robert Spurgat earned Master Model Railroader 699.

You may now view your NMRA MAGAZINE in digital format or in hardcopy as always or both! A Member can save money on membership by opting to take the digital version only.

2022 June

CHUCK KLEIN TRIBUTE

In Memoriam: Chuck Klein

I knew Chuck for some time, as I am a member of Division 4, Mid-Central Region. Several years ago, I attended my first NKP BOD meeting in Berea, Ohio, at the Berea Union Depot Restaurant. Chuck was there to give a report on an upcoming NKP 2016 convention being held in Cleveland, Ohio. At that meeting, Chuck and I talked about the convention. He asked if I would like to help. I said yes. We worked together on the 2017, 2018, 2019, and the upcoming 2022 conventions. My job was to print signs, programs, name badges, and anything else that was needed. Chuck was great to work with.

We did a lot of work for Division 4 for all types of events. This past year, I wrote an article about the Klein family's history of model railroading. Chuck and his brother Mike provided me with photos and a timeline for the story.

You could always find Chuck selling model railroad items at "Bernie's Bargains" at local train shows. We would meet at least once a month for breakfast. These were always fun get-togethers. We would often meet at each other's layouts and share project ideas. Chuck was a very good modeler but still asked for ideas or suggestions.

Chuck was a great leader. His wonderful personality and smile will be missed a great deal.

Highball, Chuck. You've got all green signals now. Your friend,

Joe Kurilec, MMR®



Chuck Klein — David Vaughn photo

2022 June

David O'Hearn earned Master Model Railroader 702.

2022 June

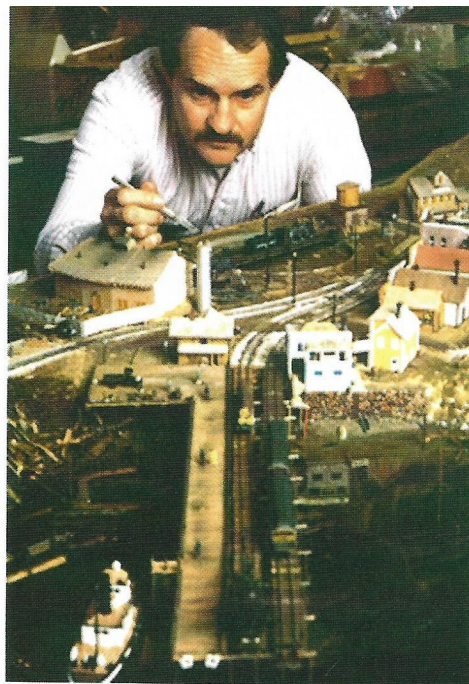
MARSHALL THOMAS TRIBUTE

Loss of an Icon

The worldwide Nn3 community has lost an icon and pillar of Nn3: Marshall Thomson, the owner of Republic Locomotive Works, passed away. I have known Marshall since the 1970s and collaborated with him on numerous Nn3 products over the years. His Republic Locomotive Works is the cornerstone of Nn3 modeling, and he was always willing to answer the phone or respond to an email to support a fellow modeler. He was sometimes an irascible curmudgeon — I can say that because he was also a dear friend. I spent many days and hours with Marshall and his wife Moira at their home in Cathlamet and at NMRA and NNGC conventions around the country. They had recently finished construction of a second home in La Paz, Mexico, and were looking forward to spending more time there.

His loss leaves a big hole in the Nn3 community — and in my heart.

*Tom Knapp, MMR®
Koloa, Kauai, Hawaii*



Marshall Thomason of Republic Locomotive Works
— *The Daily News (Longview, Washington)* image;
used with permission

2022 July

Fred Soward earned Master Model Railroader 698.



President Gordy Robinson's Column below. The significance of this article is that it is his **FIRST VISIT as President to an event. The event was a Tri-Regional Convention which was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, a one-time home of NMRA Headquarters.**

In addition, Gordy is the FIRST NMRA PRESIDENT to not be born in the continental United States. Gordy hails from the UK!

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Back in May, I attended the Indy Junction 2022 Tri-Regional convention hosted by the Midwest, Mid-Central, and North Central Regions of the NMRA and the Railway Prototype Modelers Convention. It was the first model railroad event I have been able to attend since the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show of 2020 in Springfield, Massachusetts. It was also the first time I had been able to enter the United States since the travel restrictions came into place during the pandemic. The COVID-19 travel experience was slightly different, with a lot more paperwork and a little more preparation. That said, it was a fairly straightforward process.

I would imagine attending any event for the first time as president of the NMRA would be daunting for anyone. As the first overseas president, I expected to answer lots of questions. Especially following an extended period when keeping in touch even for US-based National team members has been challenging. I didn't expect the overwhelming number of people who wished to speak to me. I must have met more than 200 NMRA members individually — a short greeting with some and extended conversations with many.

The response from those present was overwhelmingly positive, and it's warming to see the changes we have and are making for the benefit of our members are being well-received. Of course,

there are many things National does or, in some cases, doesn't do that National, individual members, and I would like to see changed, innovated, and grown. We have done so much already, but many plans are still to be realized. Progress in many cases isn't down to a lack of will from anyone; it's simply down to resources. In all cases, that's human resources, i.e., people with a passion for seeing the change we all want. If you see something we should or shouldn't be doing, there is an open door for you to come on board and make a difference for yourself and other members. We may not always be able to agree on a specific way to do something, but we can certainly go on the journey together.

During the event, I held daily tea and coffee sessions to allow members to have informal conversations with other members of the National team and me. On Thursday of the event, we held more formal meet-the-president sessions with open forum discussions that only ended when I was pulled away to get lunch on the third attempt. In the afternoon, I met with Region and Division leaders, busting some myths and discussing the challenges individual Divisions and Regions face as we continue to re-mobilize from the hibernation of the past two years. I then met with the convention committee, and we discussed the challenges they have faced delivering our first large event. A

key takeaway for me was that this convention committee had only ever met once in person before the event. I don't think that's ever happened before. We discussed the tools the National team could bring to Regions and Divisions to help the process of delivering events and to share learning from events across the country.

The final scheduled event was a joint clinic featuring Eastern District Director John Doebling and me. John presented what a vision for the NMRA could be and asked those present to seek the challenges that 150,000 members might bring. I sure do hope we can one day grow to be that large and serve model railroaders across the globe.

So, what was my takeaway from this event? Simply this: "we" (that's you) are the organization's destiny, and when we model railroaders work together, we can be the change we want to be. We have the desire to learn, innovate, change, and grow so that we can have the organization we all seek. The NMRA needs to invest in you (our members), and, in return, I know you will re-invest in the NMRA. If you see a problem or opportunity for the NMRA and have a passion for helping make change happen, then know that the door is always open.

I want to finish this month's column with some positivity for the future of our organization and hobby. At Indy Junction, a 19-year-old woman came to

the event 800 miles from her home in New England so she could go on the Amtrak shops prototype tour. She was not a model railroader but a railfan and online gamer — certainly not someone who had ever operated a layout or attended an NMRA convention. Arriving a day earlier than the tour, Barbara Soward arranged for this young lady to operate one of the modular layouts at the show. She was obviously very nervous at first, but after completing her first run across the HAVOC modular layout, she stayed and operated for about four hours.


The Amtrak tour was the following day, and while the tour was underway, the convention team organized for her to visit layouts that afternoon and an op session that evening. Fortunately, I was able to accompany her on these tours along with two other NMRA members. As usual, when taking someone for their first home layout tour, we explained the standard procedure: walk through a stranger's front door, usually without knocking, head down to the basement, and wander around their layout, asking the host lots of questions. Met with the usual puzzled look, another model railroader in the car reassured our guest that yes, people really do this, and as long as we get the correct house, we won't get into trouble.

The layout tours continued, and the questions and excitement from

the back of the car grew. We made a quick stop for dinner at the house of an NMRA member, and then we were off to the operating session. On the way, I asked, "Do you know what an operating session is?" To my surprise, she said, "Yes. Me and my friends do them online all the time." Feeling older than my years, I learned all about an online simulator op session. We arrived at the layout and went through the briefing. I took a yard job, and our guest took a road freight with MCR Division 7 member Jordan Kramer, a 25-year-old convention first-timer. It wasn't his first op session, so I knew our guest would enjoy the experience. As they waited for permission to leave the yard, I noticed the beaming smile on both of their faces; I think they were still smiling long after returning to the hotel. Certainly, the car journey home was filled with tales of mishaps and fun out on the road during the session.

The following day, we received a thank-you message and a note stating she felt she needed a large model railroad in her basement back home. She included an application form to join the NMRA, underlining my previous point that if we invest in people, they will re-invest in us.

Be kind to one another and help make the change you want to see.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon MMR". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "G" and "M".

Arrivals and a Departure

This year, the Contest Committee welcomes two new members and congratulates the retirement of its longstanding chairman, Bob Hamm, MMR®.



Arrivals

Tom Oxnard, MD, MMR®

Tom joined the NMRA in 1998 after spending years in the hobby building a layout with his children. As a member

of the Seacoast Division of the Northeastern Region, Tom met several dedicated hobbyists, which led him to consider participation in the Achievement Program. While it initially looked daunting, as he progressed through the process of earning certificates, Tom learned much more about prototype railroading and how it could enhance his enjoyment of the hobby. In fact, earning the Chief Dispatcher certificate helped him plan the operating system he now uses on his layout.

In addition to his new duties on the Contest Committee, Tom is a member of the Seacoast Division board of directors and serves as the AP Chairman for New Hampshire and the Northern Director of the Northeastern Region.

Jim Zinser, MMR®

Jim has been a member of the NMRA since 1976. His freelanced HO/HOn3 Copper Valley Railway is set in Michigan's Upper Peninsula copper mining district, circa 1954. Over the years, he has judged numerous model contests at both the Regional and National levels. He became a Master Model Railroader® in 2007.



Jim is a past member of the NMRA Board of Trustees and writes the Division Business Car Column that appears bi-monthly in the *NMRA MAGAZINE*. Jim is retired after dual careers in broadcasting and advertising.

2022 July

Arrivals & Departures Cont.

Departure

Bob Hamm, MMR®

Bob has been involved in NMRA model contests for many years. During that time, he entered models in both National contests and those of his home Region, the NER. Ultimately, he was appointed the Northeastern Region Model Contest Chairman. He earned his MMR® in 2004. In 2006, he was appointed Deputy Chair of the National Contest Committee, and he became its Chairman in 2007.

During his tenure, Bob found ways to improve an already good event. He tweaked the entrance forms, making them more helpful to both entrants and judges. He created and presented three clinics concerning the national contest: one for judging, one for entrants, and one all about filling out contest entry forms. Bob also introduced two new judging categories: Kit-Built and Scratch-Built. But probably his most important innovation was to expand beyond a purely technically judged contest to include a Popular Vote event and a non-judged Model Showcase. In so doing, Bob's vision of transitioning from a "Contest Room" to a "Celebration of Models and Crafts" was complete.

From all of us on the Contest Committee, congratulations, Bob, on your well-deserved retirement! 🎉

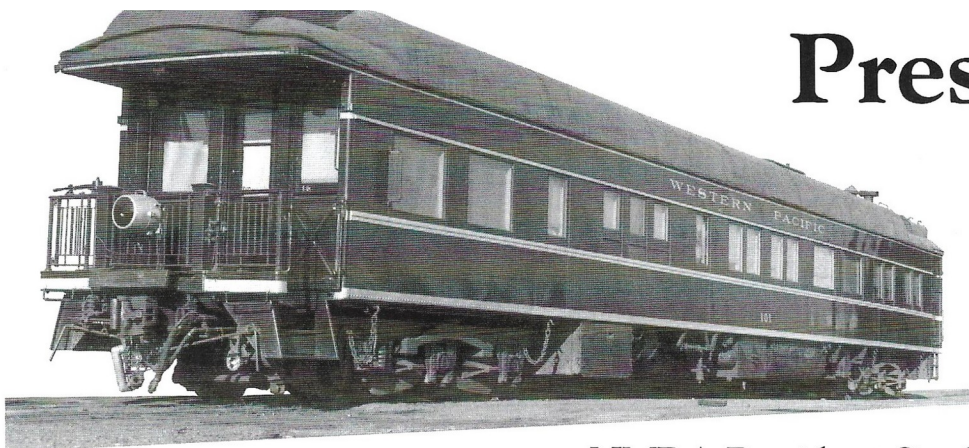


2022 August

Don Bergman earned Master Model Railroader 701.

Malcolm Jenkins earned Master Model Railroader 706.

Craig Drenkow earned Master Model Railroader 709.



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

July 2nd marked my presidency anniversary, so year one of my term has passed. It always struck me as symbolic that the British guy took the helm during the Independence Day weekend in the United States. I haven't heard of anyone throwing tea parties, so hopefully, that bodes well for the next year of my term. Some folks also tell me they now read my column with a British accent. While one is very appreciative of that, I was a little disappointed we haven't yet been able to make our digital app read the magazine to you in a British accent — I am sure the developers will be working on that.

I thought this month's ramble through the hobby world through Gordy's eyes would reflect on what we have achieved in the past year, what we are working on for next year, and offer some hope for the future. My challenge to you is the same as it is to all members of our National team: how can you help yourselves and our organization innovate, learn, grow, and share?

I suppose one of the stand-out achievements of this year for our organization has been the introduction of the digital NMRA Magazine. I know some of you were able to read the magazine for the first time in many years when the digital version launched in April 2022. The decision to go digital wasn't easy, and a lot of effort went into consulting with members and testing various options for the format and method

of delivery of the magazine. We were also able to once and for all put to bed the questions of should and could the NMRA deliver this. The result for our members is self-evident: we can now communicate with all our members, and we have a market-leading application packed with features that deliver the magazine to you.

A huge thank-you goes to our Head of Publications, Riley Triggs, for the work he and the wider team, including our partners, White River Publications, put in to deliver this project in such a short time. For those who are reading this thinking that we have lost hundreds of members because of this move, I am happy to report at the end of May 2022, we had more members than we did the previous year. This representing another huge achievement for the NMRA: after decades of decline, our organization is growing once again.

Those who have heard me speak to their Division or at an event will know how much I value transparency and member feedback. While I get hundreds of monthly emails from members and do my best to reply to you all, I felt it was important that we proactively seek feedback from all of you. To that end, we purchased an online survey tool which we have used now for three National consultations; we have also shared the tool with Regions that wished to conduct member research studies. In

the spring, we sent out renewal notices to all members in the United States of America, and we included information on how the organization spends the NMRA membership fees in an updated format that hasn't been done in over ten years. Even if we don't all agree with the current budget, at least there was awareness of what we do so that we are as transparent as we can be with you.

The Education Department has also had a busy year updating our beginner guides to represent the innovation and changes we have seen in our hobby. This ensures we are still helping those who come to us for knowledge and guidance in their early years in the hobby or those who are returning to discover a whole new world of opportunities their old Tyco train set didn't offer.

I have mentioned before that our IT team has been busy; believe me, they are swamped. They have grown their team, adding new volunteers along the way, and have supported every single project we have completed this year. With the help of others, they uploaded the back issues of the *NMRA Magazine* and its predecessors (*SCALE RAILS*, *NMRA BULLETIN*, etc.) for you to enjoy on our website. If you haven't checked them out, I implore you to do so as there is a wealth of information to help with your modeling projects. We don't reprint articles as other publications do, so I guarantee there will be something

2022 August **Gordy and British Accent! Can you hear it? Cont**

in that catalog you won't have seen before.

The IT team also helped us launch e-ballots for all NMRA members worldwide, significantly cutting down on the admin effort at election time for our volunteers. The team has already commenced a project to upgrade and address many issues with the NMRA.org website, having enlisted outside professional support from a web development expert. It is my hope that this multi-year project will enable our IT infrastructure to be set up for the future and support even more benefits for members.

My final thoughts for this year rest with recognition. As we've seen, I recognize the efforts here made by our National team. I'd also like to acknowledge the efforts of every single member to help increase the enjoyment of our hobby for all. Therefore, from now on, we will recognize your support for the NMRA after 2, 5, 10, 25, and 50 years of membership, this being just a small token of our appreciation for you.

So onward to next year; what do I see on the horizon?

We currently have several projects in flight that are due to arrive in the second half of 2022 or the first half of 2023. I've mentioned the NMRA website upgrade, and while that might not all come across the line in one chunk, you should start to see subtle changes and improvements. After this year's NMRA National Convention in St. Louis, we will be launching our new online member communication and meeting

platform, the "NMRA Interchange." This platform can connect you with NMRA members worldwide using your home computer or mobile device. We'll also be using it for a few upcoming National projects, so as they say, "watch this space."

Our restructured Standards & Conformance Department is clearing through a considerable backlog of product reviews and conformance testing that I know will help you make those purchasing decisions with renewed confidence. The Education Department will also be launching a brand-new program to deliver quality content no matter where you live and aims to provide value to members with various levels of experience. While I'm an MMR®, I promise you there is always something new to learn or try. That program will pilot in the spring of 2023 with a full launch at the NMRA National Convention 2023 in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas.

I need to sign off, but my final word of encouragement this month is that you only get out of anything what you put into it. NMRA Volunteers have put hundreds of hours into our organization in the past year, and I know it's positively impacted our hobby. I want to encourage you to think about how you can support the innovation, learning, and growth of the NMRA while sharing our hobby with others.



2022 August

Tri-Regional Convention

Indy Junction 2022 Recap

article by Barbara Soward, photos by the author unless otherwise noted

Concept

Indy Junction 2022 was held at the Marriott Indianapolis East May 18–22. This convention resulted from several “WHAT IFs?” coming together: WHAT IF we combined the resources of three NMRA Regions instead of each Region sponsoring its own convention? WHAT IF we added the Railroad Prototype Modelers (RPM) Conference? WHAT IF we structured afternoon/evening layout tours similar to the National Narrow-Gauge conventions? WHAT IF we added a Train Show, which is not usually a feature of a Regional event? WHAT IF we held the event in a suburban location where the hotel accommodations and parking are more manageable and affordable than in a bustling downtown location? WHAT IF we changed the duration of the event to five days — a little longer than the typical Regional convention

trip. For those who were unable to travel internationally to attend the NMRA National, Indy Junction 2022 would offer a uniquely different convention experience, combining the best of several model railroading worlds.

Based on survey feedback, Indy Junction 2022 was a very successful venture for the Midwest, North Central, and Mid-Central Regions and the RPM Conference. Was everything perfect? No. Are there things we would have done differently? Yes. Even though the folks behind the scenes may have been aware of snags in the plan, those issues weren’t readily apparent to the convention attendees, most of whom noted (in the survey) they would recommend the event to a friend.

Activities at the Venue

Indy Junction 2022 was the only event at the convention hotel, so model railroad activities were everywhere. When you entered the hotel at the main entrance, if you looked behind you at check-in, you would see a large ballroom filled with T-Trak modules and crews. One of the most interesting and eye-catching modules



Above: Modeling With The Masters® hands-on clinics are always a hit.

Right: Members had multiple opportunities to speak with NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®. Bob Frankrone (left), author of the *NMRA MAGAZINE*’s monthly “Love Those Loads” column presented his “Love Those Loads” clinic at the convention as well.

but shorter than the traditional week-long National Convention?

The NMRA National Convention was scheduled to be held in the United Kingdom in 2022, so the timing seemed right to try something a little different here in the US. The dates were chosen to not directly conflict with the NMRA National Convention for those wishing to make that

Indy Junction
2022
MWR NCR MCR
RPM Conference
MAY 18-22, 2022
facebook.com/indyjunction2022
www.IndyJunction2022.org

was Star Wars-themed, complete with lights and sound.

Six model railroads were displayed in the Atrium and co-located in Liberty Hall as part of the Indy Junction 2022 Train Show. These modular model railroads represented four of the most popular scales in model railroading: O (2-rail), S, HO, and N. The layouts in the Atrium included an 18x45-foot HO railroad depicting secondary rail lines in Ohio in 1923, brought to you by HAVOC — a model railroad club from Cincinnati, Ohio. Also in the Atrium were the “Hoosier S Gaugers,” a 9x13-foot S-scale layout, Jim Canter with his 8x16-foot O Scale 2-rail personal model railroad, a 6x10-foot World War II military-themed railroad owned by Larry Goodridge of



2022 August

Tri-Regional Convention



Cincinnati, Ohio, and Charles Malinowski's 2x12-foot Free-Mo modular layout "MR2GO," which is frequently on display at Indiana train shows and events.

The Atrium was bustling with activity. Besides the layouts, the Registration table (which also served as an Information Desk) was located there, along with food concessions offering affordable dining opportunities amid all the activities.

Located with the Train Show in Liberty Hall was the Central Indiana N Trak (CINTrak) Club displaying and operating its 22x28-foot layout. This Indianapolis area club has displayed its model railroad at Midwest shows and events for more than 40 years.

Also in Liberty Hall were the commercial exhibitors and craftsman courtyard vendors. In the adjacent Veterans Hall, there was the "Swap Meet" segment of the Train Show, so there was a little something for everyone who wanted to purchase items for their model railroads.

Above and right: Justin Grayson (left) and Pedro Spicer posed for visitors at Justin's layout on the Friday Fishers/Anderson layout tour. — Pedro Spicer collection

Conveniently located adjacent to the Atrium was the Rail Yard Sale, where you could sell model railroad items you no longer wanted or needed so you would have more money to spend at the Train Show! Or, on the other hand, you could buy what others no longer needed or wanted. This operation was hugely successful, bringing in approximately \$1,200 in commissions. At a commission rate of 10 percent (you do the math!), a lot of money changed hands in that room. There were a lot of happy folks



at the end of the day when they collected their proceeds.

In keeping with NMRA Regional Convention tradition, there was a contest room where models were displayed for viewing and judging. Awards were presented in a ceremony on Saturday evening.

NMRA and RPM clinicians presented a vast array of subjects, including designing, planning, and building your layout, operating on your layout, historical and prototypical considerations, as well as other specific modeling objectives. There were plenty of opportunities to learn about railroad history, enhance your modeling skills, learn how to keep your membership engaged, and just immerse yourself in everything railroad — both prototype and model — including how the NMRA of the 21st Century will be bigger and better than ever! All clinics were open to all participants, whether you were an NMRA member or an RPM participant, and in some cases, both.

The only extra-fare clinics were two Modeling With The Masters® sessions limited to 15 participants each. Painting and weathering with inexpensive craft acrylic



Above: Several modular railroads set up and operated during the convention. — Fred Soward photo

2022 August

Tri-Regional Convention

had changed, and they would not be going on the tour. Chelsea's family jumped at the opportunity to accompany her.

Knowing Chelsea and her family were traveling so far just so Chelsea could see the Amtrak Beech Grove facility, we wanted to give her as much exposure to the hobby of model railroading as time would allow. When they arrived and checked in at registration on Friday, Chelsea was introduced to Jordan Kramer — a model railroader from Cincinnati, who was probably the closest modeler to her age at the convention. Justin had been tasked with NMRA

Right and below: Amtrak fan Chelsea Gilbert (far right) and her family drove cross-country to tour Amtrak's Beech Grove facility. Local NMRA members immersed Chelsea into the model railroad hobby, and now she's a member! — Steve Harsh (right) and Bill Kennedy (below) photos



President Gordy Robinson's transportation detail. Jordan was also an operator on the Cincinnati HAVOC model railroad club layout, and he showed Chelsea how operations worked on it.

After the Amtrak tour on Saturday, Chelsea accompanied Jordan and Gordy on layout tours and operating sessions. (For additional information, see Gordy's July 2022 president's column). From all indications, she had a very good time. We are glad we were able to make a dream come true for Chelsea, and we hope her visit to Beech Grove and Indy Junction 2022 was inspiring!

Some of the most notable events at Indy Junction 2022 were the opportunities

to meet and greet NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®. His schedule was full of open forum discussions throughout the venue, including morning "coffee/tea" with Gordy and evening "festive beverages" with Gordy. He participated in several layout tours and operating sessions and was always willing to stop and chat with convention attendees.

I spent most of my convention time behind the Registration Desk, but I did attend the Pampered Chef Demonstration and one other impromptu event. Jordan Kramer led what I'm calling "Tree Clinic in a Trunk." We (Jordan, Gordy, Fred Soward, Tracy Boyd, and I) went out in the hotel's parking lot where Jordan had all the tree fixins' — dried sedum plants, gloves, paint, glue, and ground foam — in the trunk of his car. He showed us the technique, and each of us made a tree, except Fred, our photographer/videographer. That was the only model railroad "clinic" I attended at Indy Junction 2022, but it was a lot of fun! You can watch a quick video of the clinic at <https://youtu.be/wSLZipHdDsY>.

Indy Junction 2022 was a new breed of convention, a format intended to combine the best parts of NMRA Regional Conventions, NMRA National Conventions, National Narrow-Gauge Conventions, and the RPM Conference models into a new format for future conventions. Did it work? We think so. Based on survey results, most of the convention attendees who responded think so, too. 🚂



Right: Gordy visited the non-rail activity / clinic room, thanking them for supporting the hobby as well. — Fred Soward photo

2022 **Bob Phelps, Pioneer in Model Railroading** TRIBUTE

BOB PHELPS (1937–2022): PIONEER IN MODEL RAILROADING

by Mike Arnold, Atlantic District Director

Bob Phelps passed away at his home in France suddenly in March 2022. He had been the product design engineer for PECO for more years than I have any memory of (1964–2016). Bob designed the track and turnouts on which many layouts run. In 2019, he received the Distinguished Service Award at the NMRA National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, for his outstanding service to the hobby of model railways, or model railroading. I was honored to be there with Steve Haynes, PECO sales manager (and others). Upon receiving the award, Bob was very humble and taken by total surprise. He simply said, “I was doing my job.”

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®, recognized that Bob was one of our hobby’s true pioneers and made strenuous efforts to get Bob that recognition, albeit posthumously. Bob was awarded the ultimate accolade our hobby can offer. On Sunday, May 29, 2022, I had the honor of bestowing that award to his widow, Liz, at a memorial event held at PECO’s premises. It was attended by his family, friends, NMRA members and former colleagues at PECO.

The award plaque presented to Liz arrived safely onto the shores of England via a number of people attending Indy Junction the weekend before. Gordy brought it back and posted it to me. The plaque reads: “Pioneer in Model Railroading, Bob Phelps, 1937–2022. Product Design Engineer, PECO, 1964–

2016. A modeler of U.S. prototype railroads, Bob worked to improve the appearance, utility, and reliability of model track in many scales. Among his many contributions are the PECO Code 70 and Code 83 HO track lines.”

Code 70 and Code 83 track with Unifrog turnouts will be Bob’s lasting legacy. Our model railways will be an enduring tribute to him. The Streamline HO Code 83 track line was very much a personal project of Bob’s, according to Steve Haynes. To put Bob’s work (and that of PECO) into context, in the USA, Dunkin’ Donuts advertises that “America runs on Dunkin’”; you could say — without any fear of contradiction — “The hobby runs on PECO.” Bob was an NMRA member due, in part, to his passion for all things Union Pacific.

Bob follows in the footsteps of many other Pioneers who have become household names in the hobby in the USA and Canada: Irv Athearn (Athearn Trains); Albert Kalmbach (publisher of *Model Railroader*, etc.); William K. Walthers (Walthers wholesalers and manufacturers of PECO products in North America); Joshua Lionel Cowen



Above: Mike Arnold presents Liz Phelps with Bob Phelps’ Pioneer in Model Railroading award — the hobby’s highest distinction. — Peter Bowen photo

(Lionel Trains); Charles Pittman (motors); John Allen (layout design); Märklin Brothers (no, not the comedy act); Bernd Lenz (the father of DCC); and Bob Rands (Micro Engineering track).

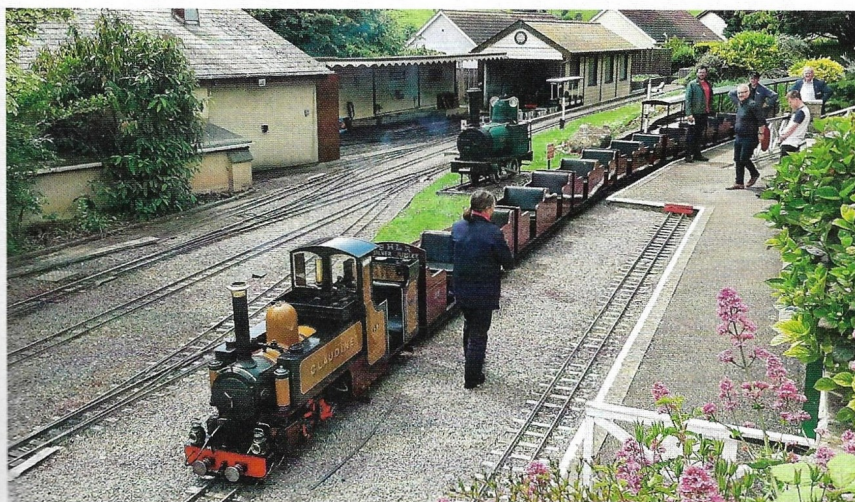
You may not have heard of Bob Rands, but mention of his name leads me to this: let me quote from the article by Jim Six (another renowned modeler in the USA) in the May 2022 issue of the digital magazine *Model Railroad Hobbyist* about his choice of track for his new layout:

“Micro Engineering and PECO have the best rail profile. PECO has the most accurate ties (aka sleepers). The combination of best rail profile, best ties, and best spike heads make PECO the all-around best track for me.”

Irv Athearn now has some decent track to run his trains on in the great model railroad empire in the sky. 🚂

Editor’s note: For a more about Bob, see “A Brief Appreciation of the Life and Work of an Exceptional Modeller and Product Designer” in the June 2022 issue of PECO’s *Continental Modeller*.

Left: Pecorama — the narrow-gauge Beer Heights Light Railway that loops around the company’s grounds — ran this special train for Bob’s family. — Mike Arnold photo



Despite my writing this column well before leaving for the National Convention in St Louis, Missouri, by the time you read it, the National Convention will be over, but not before we have had the chance to recognize the contributions of members to the organization. This year, those who have provided exemplary service to their local Divisions were recognized with an NMRA President's award.

A President's Award was also bestowed upon Riley Triggs, NMRA Publications Officer, for delivery of the *NMRA Digital Magazine* project during 2021/22. The project was greenlighted in December 2021 by the National Board of Directors and then delivered on time April 1, 2022. Beyond the initial scope of providing a web-based version of the *NMRA Magazine*, Riley also delivered mobile apps for iOS and Android devices. I'll certainly enjoy reading my *NMRA MAGAZINE* on my tablet while traveling to the National Convention.

Staying with the publishing theme, the NMRA recognized the work of Kevin EuDaly of White River Productions and Joe Fugate of *Model Railroad Hobbyist* with a Distinguished Service Award for both Kevin and Joe. Kevin founded White River Productions (WRP) in 1990 to publish a book of his authorship on the Missouri Pacific. Since then, WRP has become the publisher of 11 magazines (including this one) for the model and prototype rail hobbyist market.

Joe has done much more for the hobby than simply publishing *Model Railroad Hobbyist*. He has written articles for *Model Railroader* magazine, including the ground-breaking "Exploring the Mushroom" series. In addition, he's authored several books — available for download to anyone — about the hobby, including

the highly regarded "Guide to acrylic painting in a post-Floquil world," which is free.

The NMRA has also recognized the outstanding service of Paul Voelker with an Honorary Life Membership. Paul was the Assistant National Photo Contest Chair from 1990–2000 and the National Photo Contest Chair from 2000–present. Paul also serves as the editor of the *NMRA TURNTABLE* — a role he has held from its founding in 2017.

It's impossible for us to recognize the work of everyone within the organization, and a lot of those efforts go unnoticed yet are very valuable services to the NMRA. I want to thank all our volunteers; without your sacrifice, we wouldn't be the NMRA.

Well, I think that's a good place to leave this month's column — there are still lots of last-minute tasks to complete before I leave for our National Convention. I hope by the time you read this column, I'll have had the pleasure of meeting even more of our members from across the globe.

Thank you all once again,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GORDON" with a stylized flourish at the end, followed by "NMRA" in a similar style.

2022 September

David Hamilton earned Master Model Railroader 703.

Dean Smith earned Master Model Railroader 708.

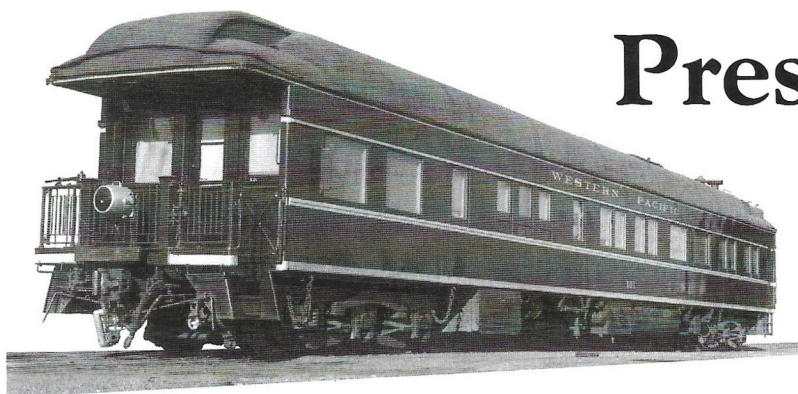
Bob Cook earned Master Model Railroader 710.

2022 October



Lower left photo: Jasmine Trocchia, Michelle Kempema, Barbara Soward and Cinthia Priest announced the Women in Model Railroading Special Interest group. (bottom right photo is Mr. Jim Canter of the Central Indiana Division. Top right photo: person unknown).

2022 October Euro Region Merges into British Region as Division



President's Car

It's nice to be back

I wrote this month's Presidents Car just after my return from our first in-person National Convention since 2019. I'm sure there will be other interesting feedback from the convention in the other pages of this month's *NMRA MAGAZINE*, so I'll focus on what happened in the National team meetings, including the NMRA Board of Directors meeting. I also want to celebrate some awards with you.

I omitted reporting to you in my last column that the European Region has merged back into the British Region, becoming a BR Division. The European Region had struggled to find volunteers to take on key leadership roles within the Region. Discussions between the British and European Regions determined the best way forward was for the European Region to become a Division of the British Region. I'd like to recognize the efforts of Jonathan Small, MMR®, and Alain Kap, MMR® (British and European Region Presidents) for your leadership, which has enabled our members across Europe to remain supported throughout this change and now on an ongoing basis by the British Region.

The NMRA Board meeting is just one of many that took place with the National team in St. Louis the weekend prior to the NMRA National Convention. The Directors, many of whom had never met except online since starting their term, met in person for the first time. Many good discussions were had about strat-

egy and long-term vision for the NMRA during the evening before the Board of Directors meeting.

The BoD meeting's agenda was lighter than previous meetings for two reasons. Firstly, the Board has started to meet four times per year with two in-person and two online BoD meetings. Secondly, the reports from the Officers, Directors, and Department Heads were shared in advance of the meeting rather than being given during the meeting, so questions and clarifications could be sorted in advance of the meeting. The reports and the minutes of previous meetings are posted on the nmra.org website, should you wish to read them.

During the meeting, the Directors approved the report of the External Audit of the 2021 NMRA accounts. The auditors actually use the NMRA as an example of good governance for other 501c3 organizations. This report is available on the nmra.org website. The nomination committee report was also accepted, and the Board welcomed new and returning directors: Mike Arnold, Atlantic District Director; Mike Mackey, MMR®, Western District Director; and Martyn Jenkins, At-Large Worldwide Director.

Riley Triggs, Publications Department Manager, gave a presentation on the progress of the digital *NMRA MAGAZINE* project, which went live in April 2022. By the end of July more than 4,400 NMRA members had registered

for the digital *NMRA MAGAZINE*. Even if you receive your *NMRA MAGAZINE* in print format, you can still access the digital edition; just go to www.nmra.org/nmra-digital-magazine to find information on the different ways you can enjoy your digital *NMRA MAGAZINE*.

IT Manager "Speed" Muller reported the NMRA has enlisted the help of a consultant to aid with the upgrade of our nmra.org website. This project will start in September 2022, and the new website will be built parallel to our existing site until a switchover (hopefully next year). The new website will seek to resolve issues with the existing site, including content management and the NMRA Store, and resolve the need for duplicate registration for the NMRA website and the digital *NMRA MAGAZINE*. The IT team is actively recruiting volunteers with service desk, web design (Drupal), and content management experience; if you want to join the team, please contact Speed directly.

The Texas Express 2023 NMRA National Convention team provided an update as well. Registration is now officially open, and we hope to see you all in August 2023 in Grapevine (Dallas/Ft. Worth area), Texas. The 2024 NMRA National Convention will be in Long Beach, California. We are still seeking expressions of interest in hosting the NMRA National Conventions in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

2022 October Euro Region Merges into British Region as Division Continued...

During the Executive Session, the Board reluctantly agreed to increase the ABC fee in line with rising costs. This was the first such increase since 2017 and will result in a membership fee increase for members in Australasia, Canada, Great Britain, and Europe from January 2023. The NMRA BoD also extended the services of Marketing Consultant Christina Zambri for a further two years.

The National team also held a 2022/23 projects workshop where they discussed the NMRA Interchange and a new NMRA Education program. The NMRA Interchange will go live this fall, enabling all NMRA members to be connected via a single messaging platform, enabling voice, video, and text communication with members everywhere. The NMRA Education team will announce its program in the new year. More information will be released about both programs in the coming months.

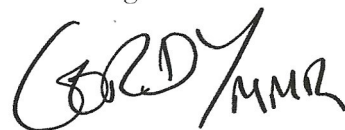
The executive committee also met with each department head to review last year's challenges and successes, as well as look forward to the opportunities and strengths their department is taking into 2022/23. Each department has also set goals to deliver a better membership experience for our members. We came away with more than 30 goals for next year. While that was happening, Eastern District Director John Doehring led a strategic session with the NMRA Directors where he posed the question, "What challenges would we need to overcome if we were an organization of 150,000 members, and what opportunities would we have to do more for model railroaders?" This same vision was presented to a packed clinic room Wednesday evening at the convention.

Before I run out of space, some awards for us to celebrate. Firstly, Meritorious Service Awards for Larry

Eggering and Mark Juett, MMR®, of the S&C department for their outstanding leadership with the DCC Working Group and Conformance & Inspection teams. A Meritorious Service Award was also presented to Peter Youngblood, MMR®, for his services as an instructor in the Modelling with the Masters® program. Distinguished Service Awards were presented to Kevin EuDaly of White River Productions and Joe Fugate for their respective contributions to the hobby. Publications Department Manager Riley Triggs was presented with a President's Award for delivery of the digital *NMRA MAGAZINE* project earlier this year.

Paul Voelker was made an Honorary Life Member of the NMRA for his decades of service to the National Contest team and at the local level within the Southeastern Region's Piedmont Division. As always, the rest of the National Convention and National Train Show was an absolute blast, with lots of modeling and very little sleep. For those who missed it, the NMRA also launched the Women In Model Railroading Special Interest Group. This group aims to promote the modeling and contribution made by women in our hobby; membership is free and open to all.

If you missed joining us in St. Louis this year, we will do it again in August 2023 at the Texas Express in Grapevine. I have no doubt everything is bigger in Texas, so register today. Finally, I'd like to say a big thank you to every member who took part in Gateway 2022, especially those who volunteered their time at the convention, in particular the host committee, who put in years of work to make the convention a big success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordy MMR". The signature is stylized, with the "G" and "M" being particularly prominent.

2022 October

St. Louis Convention Photos

Upcoming National Conventions

Right and below: Registration is open! Hopefully, these images and stories have inspired you to come to next year's event, the Texas Express in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, August 20 - 26, 2023 (<https://www.2023texasexpress.com/>) and again in 2024 in Long Beach, California. We'd love to see you there! — *Cynthia Priest photos*



Banquet

Below: "That Train Couple" YouTubers Jasmine and Frank Trocchia (red shirts) smile and wave at the photographer as we all eagerly awaited dinner, which was delicious! After dinner, the audience was treated to a delightful presentation by model railroader and actor Michael Gross. — *Cynthia Priest photo*

Inset: Eastern District Director John Doehring did a fantastic job as emcee. Read about his "St. Louis Recollections" starting on page 10. — *John Doehring photo*



2022 October

St. Louis Convention Photos

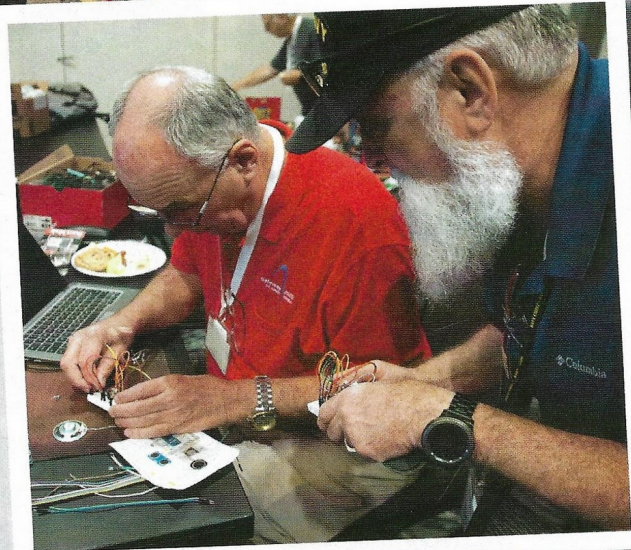


Left: Love Those Loads! Columnist Bob Frankrone shared his love of open loads with a room full of convention-goers. Anyone who visited the Celebration of Models room saw nearly all the featured loads (on their railcars) on display. — Cinthia Priest photo

Clinics



Above: Andy Zimmerman (right), who currently serves as the NMRA's Standards & Conformance Department Manager, assists Brent Blizeski with his Arduino project. Programming takes a lot of brain power; hence, the snacks located nearby. — Cinthia Priest photo



Left: National Conventions are a great venue to learn new (or improve) modeling skills. During David Lowell's clinic, "A Basic Introduction to Decals and Application," Jerry Kruger practiced sliding wet decals from their backing sheet onto a freight car. Although Jerry is an experienced modeler, he picked up a few decaling tips from this clinic. — Cinthia Priest photo



Left: Gert "Speed" Muller, the NMRA's Information Technology Department Manager, sports next year's convention logo (The Texas Express!) on his shirt while he assists students in his well-attended "Arduino Projects: Hands-on Clinic."

Master Model Railroader® Leslie Eaton also held a hands-on clinic earlier in the week: "Nano Animation for Under \$10." (Unfortunately, I missed it!) Look for her clinics and other hands-on events at next year's National Convention. — Cinthia Priest photo

2022 October

St. Louis Convention Photos

It's not everyday you get a photo with a star! John Doehring, Eastern District Director, is pictured with Michael Gross, who was the Guest Speaker at the banquet in St. Louis.



2022 October

Doug Burton earned Master Model Railroader 704.

2022 November

Gordy Robinson is discussing the new NMRA Interchange in his President's column. Along with NMRAx, and the digital version of the magazine, the NMRA is changing with the times.

Tom Emmett earned Master Model Railroader 714

Women in Model Railroading SIG Launched!

Article by Nancy Workman



Above: Nancy Workman, CEO SoundTraxx

Roughly 20 years ago, at a trade show for model train enthusiasts, one woman approached another with an idea. Pat McCue wanted someone to partner with to create an NMRA Special Interest Group (SIG) for women. As the co-owner of SoundTraxx and a somewhat fledgling modeler in HO_n30, I thought this was a great idea, and the two of us worked over the next several months to establish the first Women in Model Railroading SIG. Unfortunately, a very short time later, Pat was diagnosed with cancer and passed away. Without Pat's drive and support (and the demands of running SoundTraxx), it was too much for me to manage alone. I let the SIG fade away, but I never forgot about it.

Fast-forward to 2022. I knew it was the perfect time to revitalize and relaunch the Women in Model Railroading SIG. Over the last 15 years, it's become even more apparent lots of women share a love of trains and model railroading. I first reached out to Michelle Kempema, Executive Director of the Colorado Model Railroad Museum in Greeley, Colorado. Michelle is a known "influencer" through the museum and has a prolific social media presence. I knew she would be on board with the idea, and she quickly took charge, getting in touch with Christina Zambri and Cydney George-Abatecola.

Christina was introduced to model railroading as a marketer for the NMRA and ended up being drawn into the hobby herself along the way. She's become very passionate about her job and model railroading, actively recruiting women in the hobby to promote their activities through

a series of "Women in Model Railroading" articles in the *NMRA MAGAZINE*.

Cydney has been involved in everything from the business she and her husband own, TSG Multimedia, to hosting virtual gatherings for women at the NMRA Rails by the Bay 2021 National Convention.

Next up, I contacted Cinthia Priest, editor of the *NMRA MAGAZINE*. Cinthia was an obvious choice as an award-winning modeler and author of several books and articles. I'd known Cinthia for years (and the SoundTraxx library contains all her Santa Fe books!), and her knowledge and influence in the industry are unsurpassed.

The Women in Model Railroading Special Interest Group (WIMRR SIG) was officially founded and then announced at the NMRA National Convention (St. Louis) in July 2022. The five of us represent key stakeholders in the hobby: modelers, operators, museums/clubs, manufacturers, media, and the NMRA. We look forward to using these diverse skills to grow this new SIG. We have been involved in the hobby in some way for a combined 103 years!

We've created this SIG to be a place of encouragement for women interested in participating in this amazing and multifaceted hobby and to provide a platform (or several) for sharing ideas, dreams, and accomplishments and helping others do the same.

Officially, the WIMRR SIG's mission is to provide a space for women to share their world, their work, their ideas, and create friendships. We are also here to provide an inclusive, supportive space for women in the hobby. NMRA membership is not required to join the Women in Model Railroading Special Interest Group (WIMRR SIG), but it is encouraged. Women may also join our Facebook group (Women in Model Railroading) and Facebook railfanning group (The Steam Sisters). Members can meet and chat virtually through our newsletter, Facebook groups, and Zoom socials twice a year. Members can meet in person at events like Ladies Night Ops, Bring-a-Friend campaigns at local events, NMRA National Conventions, and other conventions where members decide to represent WIMRR.

We invite interested women to join Women in Model Railroading by visiting the SIG's webpage: <https://www.nmra.org/signs/women-in-model-railroading>



Above: Michelle Kempema, Colorado Model Railroad Museum Executive Director



Above: Christina Zambri, NMRA Marketing Consultant



Above: Cydney George-Abatecola, co-owner TSG Multimedia



Above: Cinthia Priest, co-owner Paired Rail Railroad Publications, NMRA MAGAZINE editor

2022 November **PROMOTING 2-RAIL O SCALE**



Eric Peterson (front-Center) is “The Guy” in promoting 2-rail O. He is always helping others, giving advice and is a great ambassador for 2-rail O and model railroading! Eric is a long-time, well respected Member of the Central Indiana Division.



Above: From left to right: David Vaughn, Joe Barker, and Greg Gonzales. — Michelle Kempema photo

David Vaughn, Joe Barker and Greg Gonzales

2022 December **Stephen Priest Writes about W. Allen McClelland who passed away.**

Thank You, Allen

Guest Editorial by Stephen M. Priest, MMR®

I learned of Allen McClelland in the early 1970s, during my formative model railroading years. I had been given a subscription to *Railroad Model Craftsman*, and Allen often penned stellar articles for the magazine. Allen's use of scenery, walk-around operations, and standards for his Virginian & Ohio altered my course in the hobby. Allen gave a reason for his railroad's existence, which, in turn, justified his railroad's appearance and adopted practices. His railroad, although proto-freelanced, just made sense, and I found great depth in his well-executed modeling. I remember thinking, "This imaginary V&O railroad was more believable in its presentation than many prototype railroads I had read about and later visited!" How could that be?

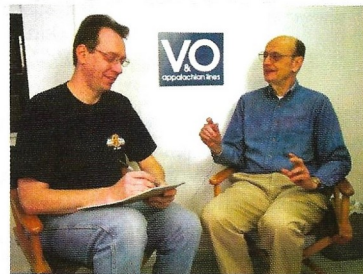
When I took on the editor's role for NMRA's *SCALE RAILS* magazine, I leaped at the chance to feature Allen in my first issue (September 2006). I drove to Ohio and spent the better part of a day "meeting" the legendary Allen McClelland and photographing his layout. I had years of pent-up questions for him, and he graciously took the time to answer them all. I learned another thing about Allen that day — he was a true gentleman. No pretense, no agendas, just a wonderful and knowledgeable model railroader willing and ready to share his knowledge and discoveries with the world. I left his home with an excellent article and respect for a man I had once only admired from a distance.

Allen and I kept in touch after that, and I occasionally visited him. When my son Joel was old enough to begin modeling, I had

Observation Car

him watch Allen's V&O video. My son was immediately hooked. As Joel got older and started to model in earnest, I suggested he may want to get his MMR®. Joel loves challenges and quickly agreed. Joel wanted to model the V&O, so I connected him with Allen. A few days after they spoke, all forms of V&O information arrived in the mail: decal sheets, paint color matches, and several books on Allen's railroad — gifts from Allen to Joel. Over the course of the following year, our 11-year-old son, motivated in part by Allen, built his rendition of the V&O. Joel, with the mentoring help of Allen McClelland, Tony Koester, and others, earned his MMR® at 12 years old — the youngest ever to do so. I feel honored and humbled to be able to say Allen not only influenced my modeling as a young teen but also inspired and encouraged my son's modeling interests and direction decades later — that's legendary.

The news of his recent passing saddened us, but the Priests remain eternally grateful Allen chose to share his wonderful gift of model railroading personally with our family. Thank you, Allen, for the memories, the mentoring, and the modeling! —
Stephen M. Priest, MMR®



Above: *SCALE RAILS* editor Stephen Priest interviewing Allen McClelland, MMR® for the September 2006 cover article on the V&O.

2022 December

Paul Brennecke earned Master Model Railroader 715.

Peter LaGuardia earned Master Model Railroader 716.

2023 January

Robert B. Rodriguez earned Master Model Railroader 718.

John Witt earned Master Model Railroader 707.

James A. Whatley earned Master Model Railroader 720.

2023 January

Meeting Ed Ravenscroft, MMR® 7

... and what he gave us

Article by Michael Collins, MMR® 157

In 1990, the year I became a Master Model Railroader®, I was working at Pan American World Airways at Kennedy Airport as a maintenance instructor. I was scheduled to attend an aircraft systems course in Phoenix, Arizona. Before I departed for Sky Harbor, I looked up the NMRA members in the area and noticed Ed Ravenscroft's information. It so happens I was planning to contact all the living MMR®s for their input for "The Masters" series I was going to write and edit (see *NMRA BULLETIN*, March 1991 to February 1993, for my "give-back" in becoming an MMR®, thanks to Rick Shoup). I called Ed to seek a visit, and he agreed.

Background

One day after class, I took the bus to Ed's development (Biltmore Estates) and walked to his house. Upon ringing the doorbell, a man opened the door. I introduced myself and asked if he was Ed.

"No, I'm the house-man; Ed is in the train room."

As he guided me through the house, I asked who the gentleman in the portrait over the mantle was. "He's Ed's father, Edward Hawks Ravenscroft, who was President of Abbott Laboratories."

We walked out the back of the house and entered the room attached to a large garage. It was a very large area filled with Ed's layout and display shelves of unpainted brass locomotives and cars.

When I met Ed, I didn't realize he had been the 10th President of the NMRA, serving two terms (1945–1946). He also served as Treasurer 1947–50, received an Honorary Life Membership in 1953, and the Presidents Award in 1956. The NMRA bestowed him the Pioneer in Model Railroading award in 1994, which is quite an accomplishment. Ed gave me a tour of his railroad, industries, and the hump classification yard. He showed me his 1965 "Tack-on Car" distribution system and operational method. It was impressive but not appealing, with an colored-info thumb tack stuck in a hole on the top of all the cars.

After he gave me his viewpoint on operations and input for an article ("The

Masters Chief Dispatch Certificate," May 1991 *NMRA BULLETIN*), I said goodbye. However, he invited me to stay for dinner, and I did.

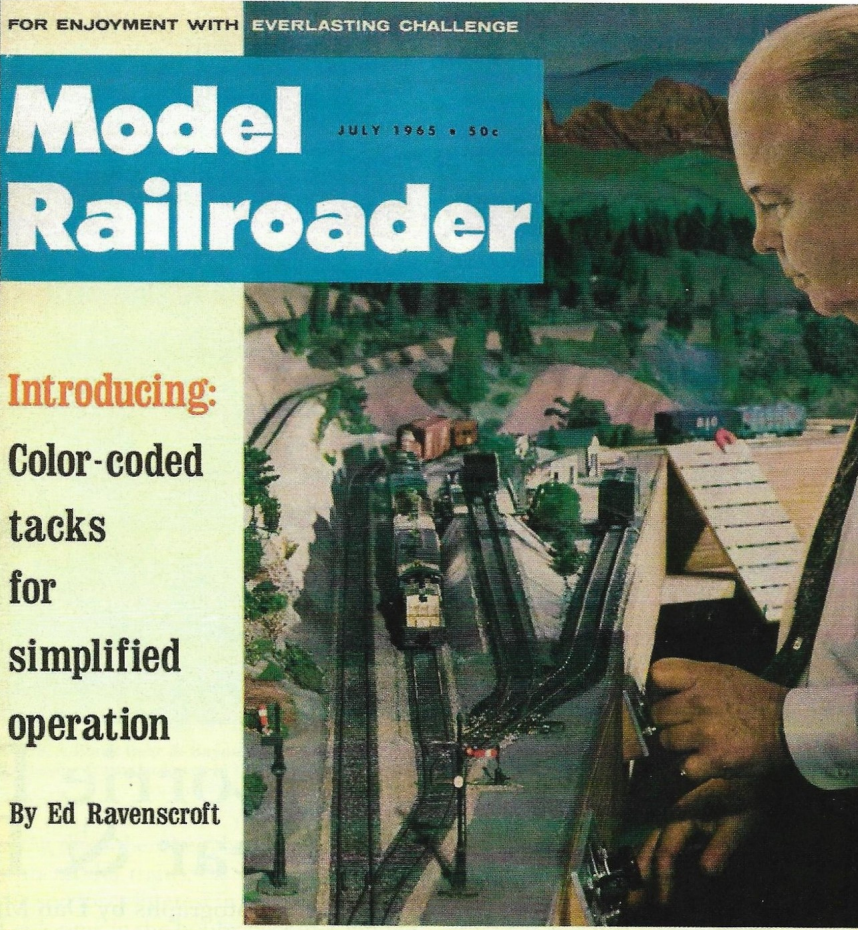
As we enjoyed our meal, Ed said to me, "You know, you own part of this house!" I quickly replied, "I'll take the train room!" He was not joking. He willed his house to the NMRA. Wow, what a generous member! After dinner, I thanked him for all he had done. And that was my special visit with Ed Ravenscroft. I'll never forget it.

Trustee Bob Sherlock reported Ed passed away on June 26, 1998, at age 90.

His home was deeded and placed in the custody of the NMRA. The NMRA sold the property, putting the proceeds into its general account.

By the way, Ed was instrumental in developing HO-scale standards, allowing the interoperability between model manufacturers we enjoy to this day. Thank you, Ed, for your time, talent, and treasure. Well done, sir!

Editor's note: the August 1998 NMRA Bulletin covers additional history and significant contributions Ed made to the hobby and the NMRA.



FOR ENJOYMENT WITH EVERLASTING CHALLENGE

Model Railroader

JULY 1965 • 50c

Introducing:
Color-coded
tacks
for
simplified
operation

By Ed Ravenscroft

Also in this issue:

- SLOW-ACTION SWITCH MACHINE**
- WALKAROUND CONTROL**
- INDUSTRIAL NARROW GAUGE**

Right: Ed's cover story for the July 1965 issue of Model Railroader magazine. — Copyright Model Railroader magazine, used by permission of Kalmbach Media

2023 January

NMRA SIG Program

Article by Seth Neumann, NMRA SIG Program Coordinator, sigs@nmra.org

An NMRA Special Interest Group (SIG) is an independent, non-profit membership group organized to provide a forum for exchanging and collecting railroad prototype and/or model railroad information about specific topics of interest to members across regional boundaries. SIGs cover many types of interests:

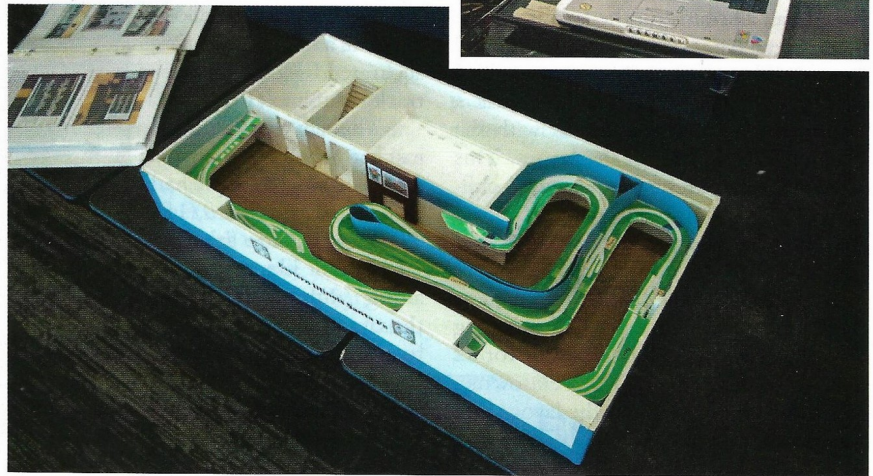
- Layout design (LDSIG)
- Model railroad operations (OPSIG)
- Various minority scales, gauges, and track standards (NRAIL, OO, O, proto:87, S, TT)
- Historical periods (American Civil War)
- Industries (Steel, sugar cane)
- Styles of prototypical operation (rail marine)
- Many railroad historical societies are also NMRA SIGs. Is yours?

- Model railroad electrical/electronic standards (CMRI, MSS)
- European trains
- Modular (T-TRAK, MSS, NRAIL, Fremo-N)
- Women In Model Railroading

Note that SIGs may be organized around subject matter or groupings of people.

Right: Seth Neumann gets ready to assist modelers with layout design in his Layout Design Bootcamp clinic at the 2010 National Convention. — Stephen Priest, MMR® photo

Below: A portion of the LDSIG display at the 2014 National Convention. — Stephen M. Priest, MMR® photo



Left: O Scale 2 Rail had information and a small layout on display at the 2022 National Convention SIG Room. — Michelle Kempema photo

Below: The Steel Mill Modelers SIG display at the 2018 National Convention. — Stephen M. Priest, MMR® photo



This list is not exhaustive. If there is an aspect of model railroading you feel needs an organizational home, an interest that can benefit from bringing modelers together to exchange ideas and information, or a group of modelers with some other characteristic in common, the SIG program is a good place to hang your hat! SIG status helps you find each other and raise awareness

of your interest within the larger hobby.

Services provided to registered SIGs:

- SIG page listing <https://www.nmra.org/special-interest-groups>
- Space in the SIG room at NMRA conventions

• Publicity in the *NMRA MAGAZINE*

• Events listings in the NMRA Calendar

What do you need to do to become an NMRA SIG?

First, SIGs are created organically by the communities they serve; we don't decide "there should be an XXXX SIG." For example, a group of women in the hobby got together and decided they could benefit from a forum where they could promote women in the hobby and created a SIG. Likewise, various modular groups needed a place to post their standards and share their best practices; SIGs support all of these needs and more.

1. Once you've decided a SIG is the right answer for your interest or group, review the SIG Program Policies and Guidelines at <https://www.nmra.org/nmra-special-interest-group-sig-policies-guidelines>

Right: Bill Hirt (left) and Phil Monet (right) stood at the ready to answer questions at the Operations SIG display at the 2018 National Convention. — *Gerry Leone, MMR® photo*



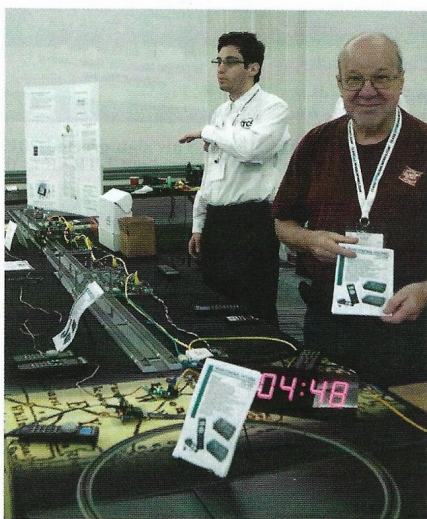
Above: The American Civil War Rail Road Historical Society's display at the 2018 National Convention. — *Gerry Leone, MMR® photo*

2. Download the application at https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/sig-application_form_oct_2020.pdf

3. Fill out the form

- a. Be sure to provide a contact email
- b. If you have a groups.io group or similar forum for discussions, list it

4. Email the form to the NMRA SIG Program Coordinator, sigs@nmra.org



Above: Karl Kobel shows off some informational material about LCC in the SIG Room at the 2022 National Convention. — *Cynthia Priest photo*



NMRA - National Model Railroad Association
 12th

We are excited to offer the opportunity to women around the world to become members of this new Special Interest Group - Women in Model Rail. [See more](#)

Women.

Launching the Women in Model Railroading SIG!

<https://www.nmra.org/sigs/women-in-model-railroading>

AA

 facebook.com

Above: NMRA's Facebook page announcing the newest Special Interest Group: Women in Model Railroading, July 2022. — *Cynthia Priest screenshot*

We'll review the form, make suggestions, and get you into the program.

In conclusion, if you feel like you're a lone wolf in some aspect of model railroading, see if there's a SIG with a similar interest. If not, consider starting one! All you need is to file a SIG application and find a platform for people to share, such as an email group or Facebook group.

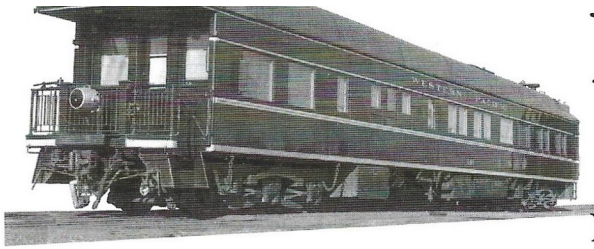
Operations Special Interest Group
OpSIG - Modeling Prototype Operations

What OpSIG offers:

- A forum to learn about and practice prototype operations on a model railroad.
- To enable your model railroad with a heightened emulation of shippers & consignees.
- A high quality glossy quarterly journal of both prototypes & model operating practices.
- A premier collection of operations oriented literature.
- Access to a network of similarly interested modelers.
- Listings of layouts, op sessions and events to which you are welcome to attend.
- The promotion of operating events, meetings & clinics.
- Collaborative with and support of the NMRA.
- An informative web site filled with all the above and more!
- For more detailed information see: www.opsig.org

OpSIG Rule Book:

- You **MUST** be a registered convention attendee to participate in these operating sessions.
- Everyone is welcome - if you are new to operations, please tell the staff here and the host at orientation.
- Outdoor pit crews should wear gloves, long pants & suitable footwear.
- Transportation to the site is NOT provided - car pool groups are formed at the appointed call board time.
- Check in at the call board, register as a driver or rider, so if you are driving alone or have transport conflicts.
- Be here at call board time to keep your slot or it will be given away unless you have notified the coordinator.
- Ask the host for permission to photograph, video and/or post your images on the web.
- Respect the effort and investment in the layouts and rolling stock - report accidents to the host at once.
- DO NOT leave the session early; it disrupts the event and affects everyone's enjoyment.
- Above all - remember Model Railroading is FUN. Enjoy your participation with the group!



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

This month, I have decided to do something different. Andy Zimmerman, our Standards and Conformance Manager, recently shared with me his observations of the leadership challenges throughout our organization. As we enter our 88th year with an average membership age of 69, we need to acknowledge and resolve these challenges.

NMRA Leadership Challenges National, Regional, and Divisional Observations and Challenges

By Andy Zimmerman

Your first thought may well be, what challenges? After all, we have a large volunteer organization with many talented and skilled individuals passionate about model railroading. How hard could it be? In an organization of more than 15,000 members, surely there are plenty who want to get involved to help lead and manage. That said, ask yourself: if you were picked today to be the President, Vice President, or other board members at the National, Regional, or Divisional levels or asked to serve in an appointed position, what would your answer be? If your first response is, oh no, not me, I couldn't because... then you just encountered our first among many challenges.

Leadership constantly presents challenges both to the leader's abilities and to them as a person. Things change, change brings challenges, and no matter how good a leader we are, we can't stop that from happening.

Irrespective of which leadership position we hold within the organization, how we handle those challenges will define us as leaders and have a great

deal to do with how effective we can be. Some challenges come from people or problems that present obstacles to reaching a goal — far more come from within ourselves (the leader themselves) or from simply being a leader. Every leader must face many challenges and learn to deal with them in some way or risk becoming cynical, disgruntled, frustrated, and eventually part of the problem instead of part of the solution. Truthfully ask yourself, have you seen this within your Division? Perhaps your Region? I know I have.

It may seem like "challenges" is another word for "problems," but that's not necessarily true. Sometimes positive situations present the most significant challenges, testing how well you can use your opportunities. A challenge is an invitation to rise to another level, to test yourself and improve in the process, to show that you can accomplish something that may seem complicated or even impossible. It has been said more than once that there are no "born leaders." Almost all leaders are made by recognizing and learning from others in leadership, emulating the good aspects, avoiding the bad, and then rising to leadership challenges.

"....Leadership presents to each of us the opportunity to demonstrate the best of what we are...."

While leadership presents us with the opportunity to demonstrate the best of what we are, it also exposes our limitations. Good leaders must overcome those limitations in many cases to transmit and follow their vision. Fear, lack of confidence, insecurity, impatience, and intolerance can be barriers to leadership. At the same time, acknowledging

and overcoming them can turn a mediocre leader into a great one. It's often challenging for people, especially those who see themselves as leaders, to admit that they might have personality traits or personal characteristics that interfere with their ability to reach their goals. Part of good leadership is learning to accept the reality of those traits and working to change them, so they don't get in the way.

".... Leadership and followership cannot be separated. Your followership sets the pattern for your Leadership...."

It does not do us much good to assume leadership positions if no one wants to follow or, worse yet, refuses to follow. As an organization, we must be willing to step up and help out, not in just a short-run commitment but long ones as well. We must demonstrate in our followership what we want from our leadership. Leadership that is indecisive or unwilling to cast vision and move the organization forward is ineffective, and the same is true of the organization's membership. Leave an organization stagnant enough, long enough, and soon you have major dysfunction on your hands. Nothing gets done, and nothing improves. New members and old will quickly ask the question, "What's the point?" and stop participating altogether. In leadership (from the National President to the Division Superintendents), one has to realize the membership deals with the same issues we do, especially when prevailed upon to "volunteer." Fear, lack of confidence, insecurity, impatience, intolerance, and our biggest obstacle: time poverty. Most of these are well-known and bear no

further explanation; however, let us address the last one, time poverty. For several years, research studies across the county have reported that individuals repeatedly identify a “lack of time” as the number one barrier or obstacle to volunteering. Respondents say, “I’m too busy,” “I have too little time,” or “I cannot make a long-term commitment.” Sound familiar? Thus, the phrase “time poverty.”

“.... a limit on what you will do, puts a limit on what you can do.....”

People today feel increasing pressures and demands for their time. Time is a precious commodity, and people are saying they don’t have enough hours in a day or week to do all the things they need/want to do, let alone volunteer to do more. There is a lingering perception volunteer work requires a long-term commitment. While we know there are many ways for people to become engaged in short-term activities, it is still true many volunteer positions require an ongoing commitment. That said, we need to ask ourselves as an organization what we really “want” to do. Remember, a limit on what you will do puts a limit on what you can do. If no one is willing to step up and get involved, if we are all too willing to sit idle and hope the next person will pick up the ball and run with it, then I would submit that as an organization, it is only a matter of time before we run out of people motivated enough to take up the helm of leadership, to try and move forward, and push to improve. In my humble opinion, when you are through improving, you’re through. It has been said, “People tend to stay motivated when they see the importance of the things they are asked to do.” With that, I am asking you here and now to see how important you all are to

the NMRA’s growth and continued existence. Step out of your comfort zones. If you are in a leadership position, look for ways to improve, and resist the urge to take a simple way out. The simple way is rarely the best.

- If you are a Region leader, look at what your Region is accomplishing, what they are achieving, and how you are growing (and be honest). If you are a Region member, ask yourself how your contributions improve your Region. How well are you supporting the person you elected to lead? If you are idle, then take a fresh look at how you can add value to your Region and the organization as a whole.

- If you are in a Division role, such as a Superintendent, what are you doing to accomplish your stated goals? You represent your area membership within the Region, and what affects your membership affects the whole organization. Likely you were selected because of what you could contribute. You have shown you have the requisite skills and knowledge to make remarkable things happen, so ask yourself what you are doing to actually “make things happen.”

Just a member? Do a presentation or help prepare one, work toward those APs or help others achieve theirs. Some of our most talented people are not in positions of formal leadership. They are members with exceptional skills in weathering, freight loads, track and resource planning, scenery, DCC and DC, rail history, and rail prototypes, to name a few. We need people here and now to do presentations. We need the volunteers to step up.

“... If nothing changes...then NOTHING changes...”

How many of you have seen Regional elections where the new leadership was elected because they ran unopposed? Their appointments

2023 January

seemed like a *fait accompli* (a thing that had already happened or been decided before those affected heard about it, leaving them with no option but to accept it). With hundreds of members in the Division and Region and all of that knowledge, skill, and ability that exists, how does that happen? Well, in short (and I hate to be the master of the obvious), no one stepped up. No one was up to the challenge; like so many, you were all too willing to let it happen. Does that mean no one cares? Certainly not! However, they are likely already engaged at some level and carrying a heavy load. So, how can you improve things? Help the organization move forward? How can you improve your Division? You have to volunteer on some level.

So here is my appeal to you: I ask that when you volunteer to “do” something, see it through. I grew up in a time when a man’s word was his bond. If he said he would do a thing, he knuckled down and got it done, without fail, without excuse, and to the best of his ability. I know many of you did as well. We can ill afford to lose this ethic. We need to continue to show that our word means something.

The first rule of leadership is, it is always your fault, be it the President, the Vice President, the Regional Board, or a

President's Column Cont.

Divisional Representative. It is incumbent that we take ownership and expect nothing but the best from our members when we need to; we need to do what is best for our organization, even if it is unpopular. One of the burdens of leadership is to be unpopular when necessary, when it is in the best interests of the Region, Division, or organization as a whole.

This has been a very frustrating thing for me. I have led and managed men and women in peacetime and conflict as a US Navy Senior Chief and a civilian, and never has the challenge been so difficult. I stand among some of the most talented and skillful people I have ever met — all with a common interest. Together we have the ability to turn something average into something extraordinary, yet we are all too willing to sit idle and wait for someone else to do it. I challenge each of you to step up your game. If your Region or Division needs better leadership, step up and take the lead, help the current leadership out, and put your name in the hat when it is time. If your Division needs a boost, step in and see where you can assist the other members, share what you have done, and tell us what obstacles we need to remove to make it easier to accomplish your job. As a member, look to where you can step in and lend a hand.

We have had a few who are already making inroads and are on their way. How long before you begin to count yourself among them?

... **“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity”...**

As a leader, I have endeavored to live by the famous words of General George S. Patton, and it has served me well: “Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.” With 15,000-plus members, I am ready to be surprised! Remember, many hands make light work, and I know many of us already on the front line would welcome the extra hand.

Andy J. Zimmerman,
ATCS AW USN Ret.

Thank you, Andy. Let’s make 2023 the year we introduce the next generation to an active NMRA as we work toward increasing that membership figure tenfold.
Happy Holidays & New Year



CINTHIA PRIEST THROWING DOWN THE GAUNLET!

I want to pursue my MMR[®],” I announced (quite resolutely, I might add). Having garnered his full attention, my husband Stephen looked at me curiously, and before he uttered a word, I stated, “and I want to do it by the end of next year.” I had rendered him speechless....well, not exactly. That long pause I initially attributed to “selective hearing” turned out to be the attribute I have come to admire most about him — he was developing an action plan for me so I could achieve my goal.

It’s no secret Stephen is a well-accomplished, lifelong model railroader. It’s also no secret model railroading and railfanning are a big part of my family’s culture. Our son, Joel, became the youngest Master Model Railroader[®] just shy of his 13th birthday. During an interview, Joel attributed his modeling success to his father’s guidance and well-equipped shop (to which I would add persistent reminders of work he needed to do). It’s pretty awesome to share this family-friendly hobby with your family.

So, you might be asking, why *haven’t* I pursued the MMR[®]? I mean, I don’t know of many households where model railroading is *the* dominant activity and subject of conversation. We’ve been active members of the NMRA for decades now, serving primarily at the National level, so what gives? Well, there are lots of reasons, and suffice it to say, a few are deeply personal. I will tell you that one big reason is I get in my own way: I overthink, I overcomplicate, and I overcriticize my work. It’s frustrating, to say the least. My mind vacillates between “I’d like to accomplish that” and “I could never accomplish that.” I want to run before

NMRA Magazine Editor Cynthia Priest

I learn to walk, and here I am — 20-plus years after earning my first Merit Award — still crawling because I thought learning to walk would take too long.

Yes, I have been modeling during those 20 years (I even hand-built a turnout!), but not to the level needed to earn more Merit Awards. I’ve come to realize that you’ll never accomplish anything if you don’t take the first step, the next, and then another one. Knowing myself, I needed someone who would gently (but firmly) push me to be my best self and pursue my goals: the very definition of a mentor. Stephen excels at mentoring (and I’m not just saying that because we’re married — I’m saying that *in spite of* being married). I’m fortunate he has agreed to take me on as a model railroading mentee — believe me, that’s not a fun job for anyone. I’m “challenging,” to put it nicely (remember that big reason I told you before?). I’m open to honest communication and feedback, which I believe will transform me in ways I can be proud of based on my *effort* (rather than achievement).

What’s holding you back? I understand some modelers aren’t interested in the AP. Might I suggest you be curious and ask yourself why, and then explore those reasons? That ruthless self-examination exercise changed my perspective, attitude, and actions.

Will I make it? I don’t know (and, quite frankly, that is not the point). I know I’m going for it, and I’d love for you to join me. Let’s resolve to do this together in the spirit of the New Year and enjoy the journey!



Model Railroading: A Daughter's Appreciation

By Cindy Fink, with photos from author's collection

I was the kid who longed for a pool table in her basement. I would have taken anything other than the model railroad, workshop, and storage areas that consumed the entire downstairs level of my childhood home. There was only one priority in our basement, and it was my dad's hobby.

Growing up, I thought of it as simply that: a hobby. And in that light, it was difficult to understand why Dad spent so much time on it and dragged me along.

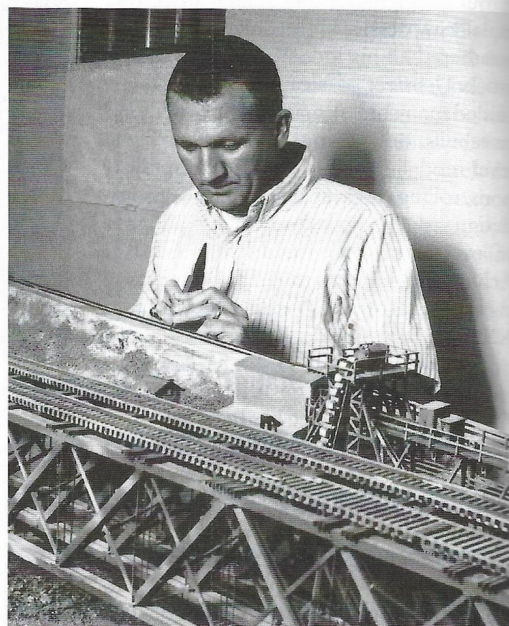
On Saturday afternoons, he'd drive me around southwest Ohio to spend what seemed like an eternity waiting at a crossing or a siding for specific trains to pass. At that point, I didn't realize the photographs he'd snap were his guides as he created scratch models of those trains for his Dayton, Duluth & Western layout.

And there I am in *Model Railroader* magazine [see the November 1977 issue], a reluctant and grumpy volunteer who didn't get much say in being featured in two of Dad's articles. Both are a side view of me holding a clipboard and pretending to run trains in our basement. Not very flattering.

My entire life, I've been proud of my dad and what he accomplished in his hobby. However, I've only recently come to an understanding of the significance of model railroading. "Hobby" doesn't do it justice, and I wish I had realized that sooner. I would have asked better questions of my dad and listened more intently to his answers.

Last year, as I began grappling with the fate of his life's work, I began to see model railroading for what it meant to him. Spending time in his basement without him, I was struck by the creativity in his process and his resulting models. I understood that in the work of designing his layout, he was a storyteller, capturing a moment in time and place for all of us to experience, albeit in HO-scale.

Historian. Artist. These two words came to my mind so many times in those days in the basement following his death. Dad's final project was sitting on the workbench, waiting for me. Left unfinished, it was a pile of small metal shapes, couplings, wheels, and a partially assembled top of an engine. Dad's soldering iron was sitting next to it, as was his well-worn red pencil that had marked up a page torn from *The Model Railroader Cyclopedica*. The page's headline read, "Modern Baltimore & Ohio Ten-Wheeler." Dad had already built enough of the engine for me to hold it up next to the page and see



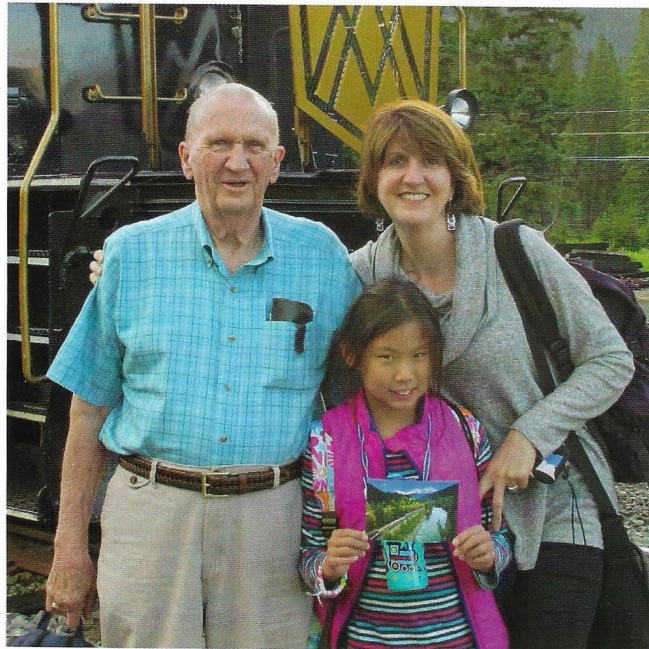
Above: Bob Fink working on his HO-scale Dayton, Duluth & Western model railroad in the basement of one of his early homes.

his attention to detail, skill, and artistry in modeling.

Dedication is another word that comes to mind now when I think of Dad's model railroading. I found on his bookshelves a photo album I'd never seen before. On the cover, Dad painted the words "Prototype Ideas, Robert Fink, 5/1/1949." Inside are small, fading photos meticulously labeled by type of train or place. "Army Tank Cars at First Street Yards, Dayton, Ohio." "Double Headed Freight New York Central near Cincinnati." "Santa Fe Engine at Gallup, New Mexico." Dad was 14 years old when he compiled the photo album.

Community. In the months after Dad's passing, his fellow model railroaders from the Dayton and Cincinnati markets were a constant source of help, guidance, and memories to share. They were as concerned as I was about the future of Dad's layout and committed to ensuring others enjoy and experience what brought him so much joy. Dedication and friendship clearly defined the relationships my dad built through a common passion for trains. Perhaps that's the greatest gift of all from model railroading. 🚂

Below: Bob Fink, Cindy Fink, and Cindy's daughter Kate after riding the Rocky Mountaineer train excursion in Canada in 2016.



2023 February

Richard Steinmann earned Master Model Railroader 719.

Gary Reynolds earned Master Model Railroader 722.

John Griffith earned Master Model Railroader 723.

Marc LaChey earned Master Model Railroader 725.



Spring Creek club, I mentioned my interest in narrow gauge, along with my frustration about an early attempt modeling in HOn3. A friend, Eric Mumper, asked

Left: (From left to right) Jerry Hoverson, MMR®, Hal Carstens, and Marc LaChey at the 2009 Lone Star Region Convention. Marc started work toward his first AP Certificate-Volunteer by bringing Mr. Carstens to the convention as guest speaker.

Hal Carstens (photo center above), of the magazine, Model Railroad Craftsman wrote about his suggestion for an NMRA Achievement Program in late 1958.

Hal was one of the main promoters of what became the Achievement Program. It was originally named the: “Achievement Awards Program.” The “Awards” was eventually dropped.

2023 March

President Gordy Robinson reported that participation in the Achievement Program was at an all-time high.

2023 March

NMRA Steam Train to the Grand Canyon

PSR Grand Canyon Special June 7–11, 2023

Article by Frank Baker, MMR® and Jesse Poole; photos by Dennis H. Ranke

The Grand Canyon is on everyone's bucket list, and what better way to get there than by an exclusive steam train? The Pacific Southwest Region's Arizona Division proudly presents a unique Regional convention: "The Grand Canyon Special 2023," featuring an all-day trip to the Grand Canyon on an all-steam train with beautifully restored coaches. Saturday is reserved for everyone to ride behind Grand Canyon Railway engine No. 4960 to one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World.

Sign up early so you won't be left behind! The convention is scheduled at the High Country Conference Center on the campus of Northern Arizona University in beautiful Flagstaff, Arizona, from June 7 through 11, 2023. These dates are the perfect season to visit the cool Arizona high country and enjoy all it offers.

Layout tours in Phoenix begin on Wednesday, June 7, during the lunch and early afternoon hours. Allow time for a tour and still arrive in Flagstaff in time for the evening ice cream social. Following the steam theme, Thursday is "Hobo Day" at the Convention cen-

ter. Our very own convention hobo will greet you and invite those eligible to join the Hobo breakfast. We will have the typical three-clinic-per-session format used at previous conventions, but one clinic in each session will focus on the Grand Canyon. Subjects at this unique series of clinics will include the Grand Canyon's history, geology, geography, the railroad that serves it, and the Fred Harvey Company. Also featured will be nearby points of interest in Williams and Flagstaff, which share some remaining stretches of historic Route 66. A Hobo Auction wraps up a remarkably busy day.

Please invite your family and friends to this convention because it has something for everyone. The Grand Canyon-centric clinics on Thursday and Friday will appeal to non-rail participants, while the other clinics focus on railroad and modeling-related subjects. Friday morning begins with a tour of the Grand Canyon Railroad engine maintenance facility in Williams. This special tour is offered to anyone riding the train the next day. Layout tours will also be available in Williams during the afternoon. Don't

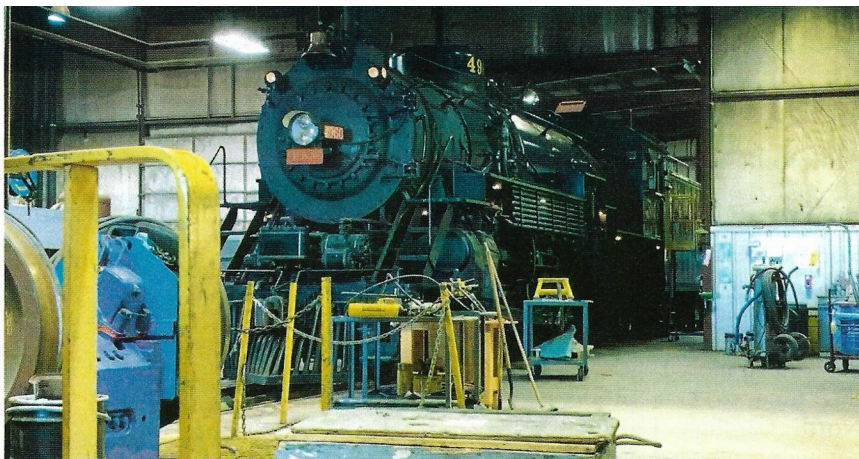


miss the swap meet at the convention center.

What better way to unwind on a Friday night than watching trains at the Flagstaff depot? An average of 100 trains pass through here daily, with the Amtrak passenger service scheduled to arrive at 8:32PM. The west side of the depot will be reserved exclusively for Convention attendees and their guests. Directly behind the depot is Route 66 and historic downtown Flagstaff offering shopping,



2023 March NMRA STEAM TRAIN GRAND CANYON CONT.



sightseeing, and a great college-town feeling.

Saturday morning is the day everyone has been waiting for with the private steam train ride to the Grand Canyon. Mikado No. 4960 will lead a consist of unique and carefully restored railcars. GCRY 4960 is a class "O-1a" 2-8-2-type steam locomotive built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1923 for Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. GCRY purchased it in 1989, restoring the engine to operating condition in 1996. It will pull a consist of four different passenger cars:

- **Pullman** — Pullman Palace Car Company constructed these cars in

1923, and Grand Canyon Railroad restored them. The cars are currently used in regular passenger service and on the *Polar Express*.

- **Coach** — Originally Rail Diesel Cars on the Boston & Maine, these cars were converted to coaches in 1983.

- **First Class** — Today's *Buckey O'Neill* car was initially delivered to Southern Railway in 1949, serving on the so-called "varnish" passenger trains like the *Southerner*, *Tennessean*, and the *Royal Palm*.

- **Luxury** — The Santa Fe car was built in 1948 for the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad. Remodeled in 1988, it became the Luxury Parlor Lounge it is today.

Knowledgeable onboard docents will point out features along the way as this unique train adventure winds through northern Arizona's high desert and pine forests. A layover provides ample time to view the Canyon's grandeur, take photos of the color and magnificence of this natural wonder, and purchase a trinket or two — all just steps away from the Grand Canyon Station. The return trip will feature a photographer's dream run-by at the Pumpkin Patch, where the tracks make a steep uphill climb.

The day isn't over yet; it concludes with the convention Awards Banquet in the evening. Highlighting this fun-filled evening is guest speaker Dale "The Toy Man" Angell.

Visit the website at www.psrconvention.org for additional convention information and registration. You can register for only the convention or train trip, or better yet, do both at the same time. You must be a National Model Railroad Association member or guest to attend. If you are not a member, you can sign up for a nine-month introductory membership as part of your registration (RailPass). This membership immediately provides all benefits, including guests to the event. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!



2023 March

Christopher Conaway earned Master Model Railroader 724.

Harold Helland earned Master Model Railroader 728.

Jeff Hanke earned Master Model Railroader 727.

2023 April

The Life of the Party

Earlier this year, I attended the NMRA National Winter Board of Directors meeting in Springfield, Massachusetts, just prior to attending the Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show. After ushering us into the clinic meeting room in the Young Building, Show Director John Sacerdote extended a warm welcome to the NMRA, thus launching the start of a fantastic weekend filled with meetings (yes, they were great), operations, and mingling with more than 21,000 fellow railroad enthusiasts.

The Board of Directors decided to hold its winter meeting at this large, well-attended venue to give members an opportunity to meet the National team. And meet them we did! Each of us had pre-scheduled two-hour time slots to be in the booth, meeting and greeting the public and answering questions about the NMRA and model railroading. We shared space with the Northeastern Region, the CNY Division and its switching layout (always a hit!), and the Northern Utah Division's "pizza box" program (see Gordy's column for more on that). To say the NMRA booth generated quite a buzz would be an understatement.

One of the best places to "hang out" that weekend was the NMRA booth! I probably spent about 85 percent of my show time there, engaging the public and promoting the NMRA and the Women in Model Railroading (WIMR) Special Interest Group to potential new members, several of whom decided to sign up on the spot! One of the highlights was when members of the WIMR brought out the cookies; it turned out to be a very suc-

Observation Car

NMRA Magazine Editor Cinthia Priest

cessful icebreaker and an extension of goodwill. Offer someone a free cookie, and regardless of whether they take you up on it or not, they're willing to hear what you have to say about the hobby and the NMRA (ask me how I know!).

Everyone who staffed the booth that weekend epitomized the NMRA's lifeblood: volunteers — from the Board of Directors to Officers to Department Heads and Managers to local Region and Division members to Special Interest Group members to 100% NMRA Club members and more. NMRA volunteers did such a terrific job exuding enthusiasm for the organization that the booth couldn't hold everyone at times, and group conversations often spilled into the aisles. Indeed, volunteers are "the life of the party," so to speak. The NMRA's mission depends largely on the efforts of volunteers, who trade their time and talent for the opportunity to create, enhance, and manage member benefits and educational programs, support organizational and administrative operations, and so much more. Beyond the possibility of earning "points" toward the Volunteer Achievement certificate (see *Destination MMR*, Part 3, page 36), volunteering is intrinsically self-rewarding — no wonder it's the most frequently earned AP certificate year after year. The NMRA seeks volunteers at every level (Division, Region, National). Contact your Division, Region or National team and ask how you can help. Let's keep this party going!

Cinthia



Milestone! MMR#700, Dan Hinel of the Central Indiana Division.

2023 April

LARRY EGGERING TRIBUTE

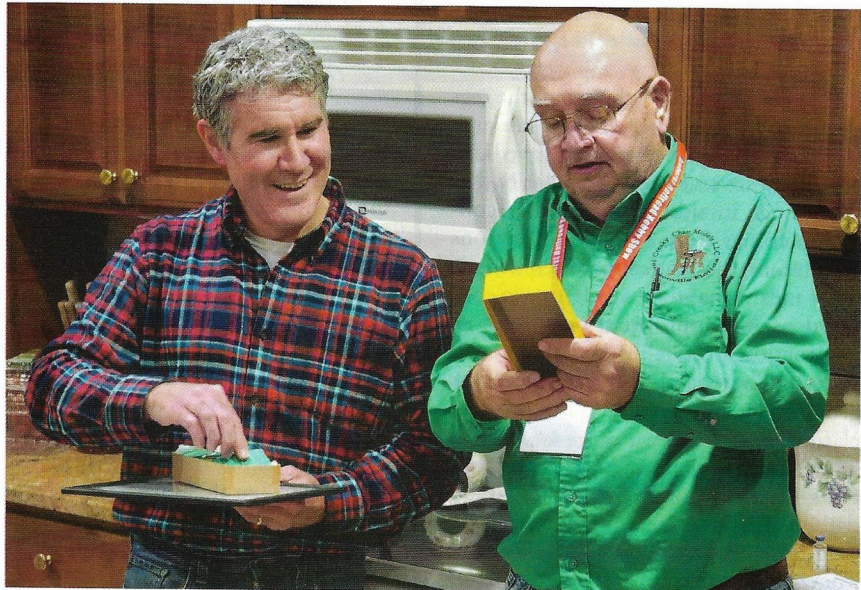
In Memoriam of Lawrence (Larry) Eggering: 1956–2023

by Andy Zimmerman, Manager,
Standards & Conformance
Department

Known to many as “Uncle Larry,” Lawrence Robert Eggering, age 66, of Jacksonville, Florida, passed away on Monday, January 30, 2023.

One of the hardest things for those of us in leadership is to notify others when one of our warriors has fallen. After having a *very* productive weekend in Springfield, Massachusetts, with the NMRA National Team and discussing all kinds of plans for the future of the Standards and Conformance (S&C) team, it was my unfortunate duty to report the Standards and Conformance Manager, Lawrence (Larry) Eggering, passed away in his sleep on Monday, January 30, 2023.

Larry was well-known on the National, Regional, and local levels. He had been a part of early podcasts, and of course, his famous bit about the “Schnausage Brothers” — who made “Schnausages: the Meat that Cooks Itself” was always a fun listen. Larry was a ubiquitous individual who seemed to know everyone and anyone in model railroading. Larry was well-regarded in the model railroad community and touched the lives of many in unique ways. Larry was heavily involved in building and installing technology to drive or enhance the model railroading experience. He created systems that ranged from Arduinos programmed to drive animations to creating DCC++ systems that ran your entire DCC layout for pennies on the dollar. His skill and knowledge brought him to the attention of the NMRA leadership, and he was selected to head up the DCC Working Group in March 2022. He had some big shoes to fill, but Larry’s experience and background provided him with the means to take the reins and keep the team moving forward. His years of relationships and interaction opened many doors and saw the team grow with volunteers and manufacturers alike. Larry spent his last hours doing what he did best and enjoying the company of fellow model railroaders and the NMRA team at the Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show. Larry was to leave the show early to keep his promise to attend his granddaughter’s birthday. According to his wife, Larry felt



Above: Larry Eggering (right) presents Chris Adams with a Schnausage Car and a certificate of induction into the “Schnausage Brotherhood.” — Speed Mueller photo

a little “off” from his flight home from Amherst to Jacksonville. He attended his granddaughter’s birthday party with family and friends and went home Sunday night. His wife said he retired early and did not get up at his usual time. Figuring he was just tired from the whirlwind of events that past weekend, she let him sleep in but, after a while, went in to get him up as they were to meet friends, and she discovered he had passed away in his sleep.

While we mourn the loss of Larry and support his family with thoughts and prayers, let us remember all his great contributions and the positive impact he had on us all.

Please keep Larry’s family in your prayers. He strongly supported what the National team has been doing and was a true asset to my team. His dynamic personality and friendship will be missed. Fair winds and following seas, Larry, we have the watch!

Larry is survived by his wife of 42 years, Charito

(Villanueva). Daughter Michelle Hickey (Ryan), grandchildren Madeline, Evan, and Austin Hickey, son Ralph Eggering (Jennifer), grandchildren Aaron, Alora, and Aiden Eggering, brother George Eggering (Joan), nephew John Eggering, lots of brothers and sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, great-nieces and -nephews, cousins, friends and fellow model railroaders. Larry described himself as: Grandfather of six! Ordained Christian minister and professional model railroad builder.👍

Below: Larry (far left) poses with Karl Kobel, SoundTraxx CEO Nancy Workman, and the NMRA Standards & Conformance Electrical Manager Brian Barnt during the 2023 Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show. — Michelle Kempema photo



2023 April

Meet Members of the NMRA Standards & Conformance Team

Meet Ethan Bernstein

Andy Zimmerman,
S&C Department Manager

Ethan is a new addition to the team; he is enthusiastic and knowledgeable beyond his years. Ethan brings a youthful and energetic approach to all he does. His dedication to the hobby is evident in all of his efforts, and his addition to our team has been amazing, to say the least. Ethan has a drive and a passion for model railroading that is not often seen in his age group. He is a welcome addition to our team and represents the NMRA and the S&C Department well.

From Ethan:

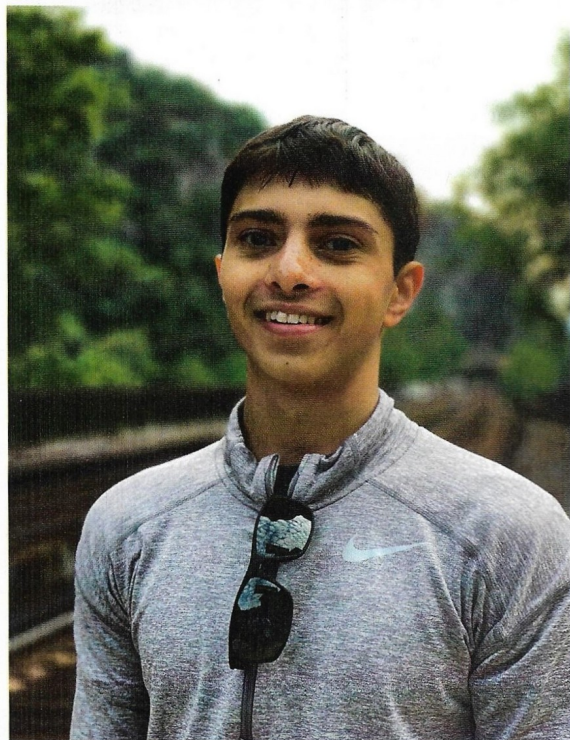
I am a sophomore at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, studying Materials Science and Engineering. My modeling interests guided me to my major, specifically my love of scratchbuilding and experimenting with different materials. Though my time for modeling is minimal nowadays, I attend every train show and club meeting I can, and my article-writing is still going strong!

Trains are my obsession. My addiction to trains goes back as far as I can remember. Anything mechanical that moves has always interested me, especially vehicles and transportation equipment. My model railroading journey was probably sparked upon a visit to Wegmans supermarket. Hanging from the ceiling were two oval loops of G-scale track with Wegmans-branded rolling stock behind steam and diesel locomotives puffing smoke. I insisted upon walking by the trains every visit to Wegmans. My parents must have taken note of my subtle obsession with the Wegmans trains, as one special Christmas, I received a Wegmans Lionel set, which I still run around the Christmas tree every year.

The Lionel train was followed by an HO-scale starter set and, eventually, my discovery of N-scale after being enamored by the tiny trains at several local hobby stores. My first foray into N-scale

began with a few old dummy engines and Bachmann train cars without track around the age of six. I bought my first powered locomotive a short time later (a Kato SD90MAC), but at the time, I did not care that it had a motor (nor that it was DCC equipped), as I just wanted a miniature model of a big six-axle diesel. I purchased my first N-scale train set (Kato freight starter set) at age eight, and N-scale has since proceeded to occupy a fair portion of my parents' basement. My love for N-scale stems from my fascination and appreciation for small, precise engineering. My favorite toys have always been the smallest trucks, planes, trains, and Transformers. In addition, I love to tinker and build, so scale modeling is a natural progression for my engineering abilities.

When I first ventured into model railroading, I did not strongly prefer any railroad or era; I loved them all. During the pandemic, my father and I picked up railfanning, which has focused my modeling interest on modern-day railroading, specifically CSX's Capital Subdivision — the inspiration for my current layout. My layout, set in the present day, features industries and scenery inspired by what I see trackside with my father. I find my modeling efforts to be most rewarding when they resemble what I remember, not necessarily perfectly recreating all the actual location details, just those most prominent in my mind so that I may be reminded of those locations and associated memories. Although I do my best to focus on modern-day equipment accurate to my prototype, I cannot resist the temptation of big steam and streamlined diesels of the transition era. As a compromise, I run two eras of equipment on my



layout: present-day CSX and predecessor Baltimore & Ohio in the 1940s–50s.

I am a part of several model railroading groups to which I owe many thanks for welcoming me and providing a haven to talk trains. Baltimore Area NTRAK (BANTRAK) was the first model train club I joined, and I cannot thank them enough for so willingly welcoming a young modeler into the group and offering advice and assistance to get me playing with trains with the rest of the club. My interest in writing articles for model railroad publications began with authoring articles for the BANTRAK newsletter. I have since written articles for NRail and now the NMRA, with both organizations promoting my modeling interests and writing abilities. Sykesville and Patapsco Railway in Sykesville, Maryland, has provided yet another fun and relaxing atmosphere to play with trains while entertaining the local community during open houses. I have learned much from the model railroading community, the most important being the continued sharing of knowledge to further and inspire the modeling of others. 🚂

2023 May

Meet Members of the NMRA Standards & Conformance Team

Meet Michael Mickens

My model train journey started with the familiar tale: I had Lionel trains, Tyco trains, and trains around the Christmas tree. Without any adult guidance, those trains ended up in pieces as accidents occurred regularly with an assortment of metal vehicles and the garage floor.

A high school friend, Elrond Lawrence, introduced me to railfanning. We would take long trips to chase and photograph trains across California, Nevada, and Arizona. We lived in Fontana, California, for many years, and as far as I was concerned, it was the center of the railroad universe. Cajon Pass was to the north, Kaiser Steel to the

west, Santa Fe's San Bernardino shops to the east, and Southern Pacific's Colton Yard (now Union Pacific) to the south. There was plenty of railroad action to watch and photograph for many years.

When I was 24 years old, I became a correctional officer and moved to the Central Coast of California, where I lived for 25 years. My railroad universe had shrunk to a small galaxy: the Southern Pacific Coast Line (now UP) and the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. Although it was a beautiful place to live, it offered little for the daily railfan. The lack of a variety of real trains directed me to the world of model trains.

In 2004, I joined the San Luis Obispo Model Railroad Club as an N-scaler. The club was largely an HO-scale group, but it was dividing itself. The NMRA module members were putting their modules in storage and going with home-based layouts, and the Free-mo module modelers formed their own group. With five N-scale members left, we reorganized the group into a 501(c)(3) - the San Luis Obispo Model Railroad Association (SLOMRA).

I held three different officer positions over 12 years in the SLOMRA, and my favorite was being the secretary. A highlight of my time with SLOMRA was when we made a custom boxcar and met Rod Stewart backstage at a concert to give him the boxcar. Our meet-and-greet photo made it into *Model Railroader* magazine.

The group adopted the BendTrack standard for their N-scale modules. Eventually, we had enough members, and we returned to a hybrid HO modular group made up of Free-mo and NMRA modules. Besides local events, the SLOMRA traveled to several shows with N- and HO-scale modules up and down California from Anaheim to Sacramento.

After 25 years, I transferred back to Southern California and started an informal group of modelers. I created a concept standard called "Simple Mo" — HO modules that could connect with Free-mo modules but do not meet all the standards. A highlight while living in SoCal was being a docent on the only public passenger excursion of UP No. 4014 — an incredible experience. As another five years passed, I decided to retire and move closer to family in Northern California.

I now live in the Sierra Foothills and have started a new group: Gold Country Model Railroaders. We are a loose-knit group of friends with Simple Mo and Free-mo modules and have been to three train shows. I usually have several modules set up in the garage for run and work sessions. I enjoy modeling all railroads; my favorite is Kaiser Steel's Eagle Mountain Mine. 🚂



2023 May

Carl Smeigh, Jr. earned Master Model Railroader 726.

Rick Martin earned Master Model Railroader 731.

Susan Werner earned Master Model Railroader 729. Susan becomes the 10th lady to achieve her MMR!

2023 June DR. ROBERT SPURGAT, MMR, TRIBUTE

**In Memoriam:
Dr. Robert M. Spurgat, MMR®**

We recently lost another good man, Dr. Robert M. Spurgat, MMR®, who passed away at the age of 84. Robert was one of the nicest people you could meet in our hobby.

He received an undergraduate degree from Valparaiso University in Indiana and attended medical school at SUNY College of Medicine, Syracuse, New York. Robert met his lovely wife, Susan, while completing a fellowship at the University of Cincinnati. He and his family moved to St. Joseph in 1977, then Robert retired from his medical practice in 2004.

Robert had a distinguished medical career as a physician with Internal Medicine Associates in St. Joseph, Missouri, including specialty work in pulmonary disease. He served as Medical Director of Respiratory Therapy at Heartland Hospital and was the President of the Heartland Medical Staff from 1991-1992. He served with several other prominent medical associations throughout his career.



He loved model railroading, fishing, and the outdoors. He became infected with the “model RR disease” at the early age of 12 years, and he could not shake it! In 1998, his home layout was on tour for the this NMRA Kansas City National Convention.

He always helped the modeling community when possible. He was “Paymaster” for Turkey Creek Division for several years and most recently served as our Achievement Program Division Director for the last two years. Robert achieved the highest honor, Master Model Railroader® Certificate, in the Spring of 2022, MMR® #699.

Robert was a man of integrity and honor, with the bones of a gentleman and the skills of a craftsman. All his friends at Turkey Creek Model Railroad Group will miss him — our condolences to his family.

Larry W. Diehl



Saying Goodbye to a Dear Friend

This one is tough for me to write because it's about the passing of a good friend who helped keep the Division Business Car rolling. John Grubb (pronounced Grewb) and I met at the ad agency where we both worked. We were paired together as a "Creative Team" consisting of a writer and an art director. As the writer, it was my job to come up with the words for the TV, billboard, and print ads we created for the agency's clients. John had the harder job — creating and supervising the "look" of those ads. But while each of us had specific responsibilities, creating ads was collaborative. Sometimes it's easy, sometimes not, but for John and me, we just clicked.

I think part of it was because we shared previous life experiences. We had previously worked in television and were winners of all-expense paid trips to Vietnam. But the biggest surprise was that we were both into model railroad-ing! Thanks to his graphic arts talent, John designed and scratchbuilt fabulous, highly detailed structures for his On30 layout. He also took on the challenge of designing and building modular benchwork for my layout, making it easier to take with me when I move.

A few years ago, John stepped in to help fill a need the Division Business Car was facing. Chuck Diljak, who came up with the idea of posting material from the column to the NMRA website, had to relinquish that job because his day job kept consuming more and more of his time. John stepped in immediately, keeping the article flow going to the website without interruption. The NMRA awarded John a Meritorious Service Award in 2018 for his work. John continued in that capacity until Chuck retired and could again take on the posting job.

John had other challenges to take on as well. For much of his adult life, he battled heart disease, suffering multiple

heart attacks along the way, even one that occurred in the office where we worked. Another one required open-heart surgery to fix. While that procedure was successful, he suffered a stroke on the operating table that paralyzed the left side of his body. John fought back and, over time, regained the ability to walk and use his arm and hand. So once again, he was back building models, attending operating sessions, and enjoying time with his family and friends.

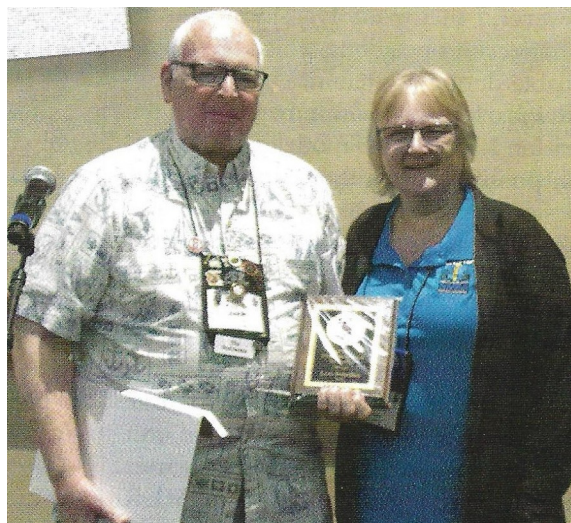
Sadly, on Friday, March 31, John's journey through life ended. He was 75 years old. He is survived by his wife Carol, his sons Andrew and Robert, and all of us who will miss his kindness, humor, and quick wit.

As this journey of the Division Business Car comes to an end, one might say that maybe this time, it should be viewed as a metaphoric funeral car. No, John wouldn't have wanted it that way. Instead, it will be a party car where all of us who knew him or knew of him have gathered virtually to celebrate the life of a very remarkable man. 🚗

2023 June

President's Award to Lori Sebelley

Right: Jack Hamilton, MMR®, presents Lori Sebelley with the 2022 PNR President's Award. According to Jeff Herrmann, PNR President, "Lori has been active in the NMRA for over 20 years and is an outstanding member of the model railroading community. She does this work quietly, without fanfare, and 'behind the scenes,' and never seeks (nor receives) much in the way of recognition. She has worked diligently to support our Region and 7th Division and, with the presentation of the 2022 PNR President's Award, is now recognized for her many years of enthusiastic, efficient, and dedicated service." —Jeff Schulz photo, May 2022



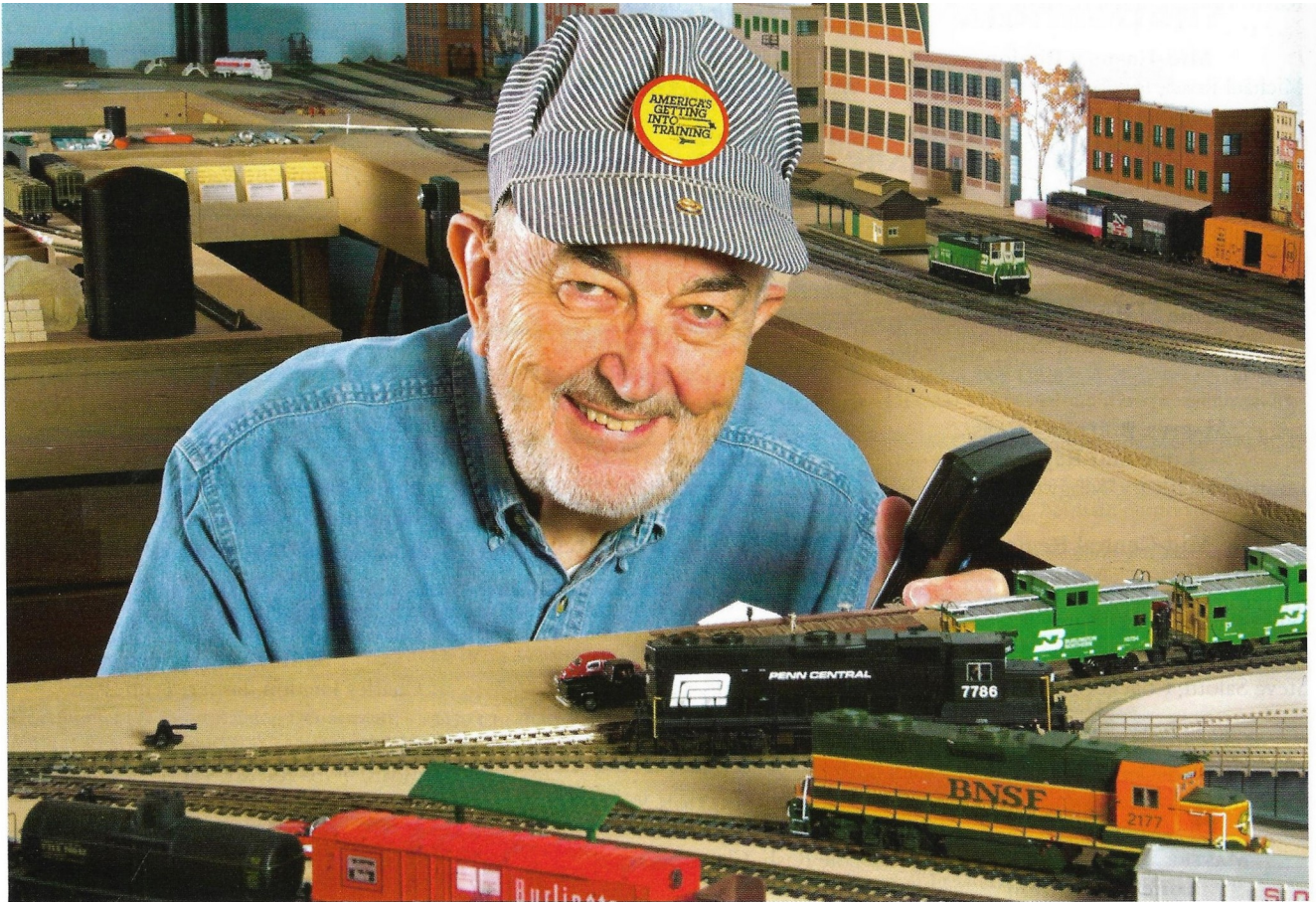
2023 June



Milt Moore who drew the THUMBZ cartoons that appeared for years is pictured holding a display of his work. Newer members may not be aware of Thumbz, so a special display was created for the St. Louis Convention.

2023 June

ED LIESSE MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD



**ED LIESSE TO RECEIVE
NMRA MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD
FOR MANY YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE**

Ed Liesse of Federal Way, Washington, has been selected to receive the NMRA Meritorious Service Award. Ed joined the NMRA more than 70 years ago, in January 1952, while still in high school. Along the way, he received lots of guidance from many of the hobby's famous names, including Ed Ravenscroft.

A lifelong Pennsy fan, Ed grew up a block-and-a-half from the New York Central/Pennsylvania Railroad "raceway"

and could see the *Twentieth Century Limited* and the *Broadway Limited* racing each other through town before the lines diverged a bit to the east.

Ed received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Purdue University, the latter in Industrial Education. Professionally, Mr. Liesse worked in Quality Control for Western Electric and taught high school Industrial Arts. However, he spent the bulk of his career at United Airlines in California, eventu-

ally retiring as Manager of Maintenance Training.

For more than 70 years, Ed has had continuous membership in NMRA. He has served in many club, Division, and Region positions. For the last 13 years, Ed has served as Office Manager for the Pacific Northwest Region.

Ed is also a Life Member of the NMRA and received the NMRA Fellow Award in 2013.

John Decker earned Master Model Railroader 733.

Richard Turton earned Master Model Railroader 734.

2023 July

Ed O'Rourke, new Member Contest Committee

On the Arrival Track

This year the Contest Committee welcomes a new member: Ed O'Rourke, MMR®.

My involvement with model railroading began when my dad returned from serving in Germany during the Korean War with a set of Märklin Trains, which I still have set up for my grandchildren to run. Growing up in Southern Connecticut and watching New Haven's electrics gave me a love for traction, so I model the New Haven in about 1950.

I first joined the NMRA as a teenager in the 1960s, inspired by a visit to the layout of Bob Higgins, a local modeler and NMRA member in northern Connecticut. I dropped out at some point due to finances. Then, in November 2000, I stopped by the Central New York Division table at the local train show and met Jim Heidt, founder of the Division, past NER President, and Member-Aid Chair. Jim convinced me I should join the Division, so I filled out the form, mailed my check, and attended a Division meeting. I enjoyed the company, met several interesting people, and decided this was worth doing. I got involved in the Division, became a Region Director, and am now in my first term as NER President. I completed my MMR® as a COVID project in February 2021. I have judged at the Region level and have experience as a Woodwind adjudicator for the NYS School Music Association.

I look forward to working on the National Contest Committee.



2023 July

Tom Persoon earned Master Model Railroader 735

2023 July

NMRA's \$200 Matching Funds Are Underused

Apply for Your Division's Award Today

Article by Christopher J. Palermo, At-Large North America Director

For many years, NMRA has offered matching funds to all Divisions to assist with the cost of member retention activities. In early 2022, the NMRA's Board of Directors increased the amount of these annual awards to \$200 USD per qualifying Division. I manage and track this service for the NMRA and was pleased to arrange 14 awards in 2022, primarily to central and northeast U.S. Divisions. But Canadian and western U.S. Divisions are "leaving dollars on the table," so why not apply today?

To receive an award, simply conceive and plan a Division event that promotes member retention. For ideas about activities, look at the Division Superintendent's

Handbook, available online at <https://www.nmra.org/Division-superintendents-handbook-managing-nmra-Division> (members-only login required). Examples of qualifying expenses include materials or handouts for clinics, model contests, layout tours, prototype tours, and subscriptions for email communications services. Any out-of-pocket expense credibly associated with your efforts to retain and satisfy existing members should qualify. If you're unsure, ask me via e-mail: alnadir@nmra.org.

Next, obtain pre-approval for matching funds by completing the simple application form at [https://www.nmra.org/news/nmra-Division-retention-event-matching-fund-program-january-2nd-2018-and-up-](https://www.nmra.org/news/nmra-Division-retention-event-matching-fund-program-january-2nd-2018-and-updated-february-2022)

[dated-february-2022](https://www.nmra.org/news/nmra-Division-retention-event-matching-fund-program-january-2nd-2018-and-updated-february-2022) and emailing it to me at alnadir@nmra.org. I'll sign and return a qualifying application to you. Hold your event, then send receipts for your out-of-pocket expenses, plus your signed application form, to Jenny Hendricks, NMRA's Chief Administrative Officer, at nmracao@nmra.org. Jenny's team will arrange a payment to your Division Treasurer promptly.

Each Division can receive one matching payment of up to \$200 USD once per calendar year. While the Board wants your Division to receive funds, we've budgeted funds for a limited number of Divisions, so these funds could run out. Apply early, run a great member retention event, and thanks for your continued support of the NMRA. 🚂

2023 August

James Fairbanks earned Master Model Railroader 736.

FROM HEADQUARTERS

2023 PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR SERVICE FOR DIVISION

Rick Coble
NMRA Vice President

The NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division is awarded by the NMRA President to one individual in a Division in each Region per year, who has done outstanding work to make his or her local Division effective, engaging, and welcoming to members. Individuals are recommended to the NMRA President by the NMRA National Board of Directors, National Officers, or Region Presidents, as appropriate, and preferably always with the guidance of the Region Officials.

2023 Honorees

Australasian Region
British Region
Lone Star Region
Mid-Continent Region
Midwest Region
North Central Region
Northeastern Region
Pacific Coast Region
Pacific Northwest Region
Pacific Southwest Region
Rocky Mountain Region
Southeastern Region
Sunshine Region
Thousand Lakes Region

Wayne Eagle
Mike Arnold
Betty Mitchell
Ryan Moats, MMR®
Jim Osborn
Marshall Stull
Harold Russell, MMR®
Dave Putnam
Russ Segner
Kevin Spady
Al Hovey
Sally Bando
Bob Leonard
Marion Manning

2023 August

Meet Members of the NMRA Standards & Conformance Team

Meet Chris Thompson

My interest in trains goes back to when I was very young. My mom used to tell a story about how I would beg my Grandpa to take me in the car to see trains when I was 2 or 3 years old. Growing up in Northwest Indiana in the 1960s, finding a train wasn't very difficult. All the Eastern railroads went through this area to get into Chicago, so our town was crisscrossed with tracks — nice for seeing trains, but not so great for people fighting traffic and trains during rush hour.

Like many others, my first train set was a Lionel steamer with a couple of cars and a circle of track. A few years later, I had a Tyco HO-scale set that ran in a figure-eight loop. In high school, I built a layout on a sheet of plywood following Linn Westcott's book, *HO Railroad That Grows*, but due to lack of funds, it only had a couple of Atlas buildings and no scenery. In the 1970s, I bought a book, *Practical Electronic Projects for Model Railroaders*, by Peter Thorne (I still have this book). I was totally fascinated by the ability to build circuits that could tell you where your train was on the tracks, or a throttle that would simulate the momentum of heavy trains. I had no idea how it worked, nor did I ever build any of it, but I wanted to learn how. This interest heavily influenced my pursuit of studying electronics for a career.

After high school, I did a stint in the military and then was trying to build a career and raise a family, so not much model railroading was accomplished until about 2004. I started building a small layout in the loft of our house and got to the point where I could run some trains and do a little scenery. A move in 2007 spelled the demise of that layout.

In the early 2000s, I saw an entry in Model Railroader's "News & Products" section offering a woodside gondola kit from the Monon Railroad Historical-Technical Society. I remembered seeing the Monon trains when visiting family in central Indiana when I was young, so my interest sparked. I bought a couple of cars and joined the Monon Railroad Historical-Technical Society. I started col-



lecting Monon equipment (when I could find it) and learning about the railroad. The Monon is a home-grown Indiana railroad, so the connection to my roots greatly appealed to me since my career has taken me to all parts of the country, away from where I grew up.

In 2009 I started building a sectional layout to move it out of the guest bedroom when needed. Grandchildren arrived in 2010, which greatly restricted the time available for trains. I worked on it when I could, not making much progress.

Starting to ponder retirement, I joined the NMRA in 2019 during the PSR Convention in Mesa, Arizona, to get more involved with others in the hobby. Of course, a few months later, COVID shut everything down. While this didn't make it easy to connect with others in the hobby, the advent of Zoom meetings and NMRAX made connecting with other model railroaders feasible. I did a lot of work on my railroad, and I got to the point of running some trains and doing some scenery. I successfully negotiated land rights to a spare bedroom to be dedicated for a railroad, so 2023 will see the start of a new railroad for my Monon Route.

My interest in the Conformance & Inspection team stems from my aerospace career as an electronics and electro-me-

chanical test engineer. I tested and repaired airborne equipment for many years, developed and wrote test procedures, and later managed test teams. Since my retirement in 2021, I wanted to continue doing some of the work I really enjoyed, minus the challenging deadlines and management headaches. While attending the 2022 NMRA National Convention in St. Louis, I had the opportunity to meet some of the leadership team in the Standards & Conformance Group. Discussions with them led to me joining the team. I'm excited to be able to use some of my skills to help further the hobby we all love! 🚂

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Meet Members of the NMRA Standards & Conformance Team

Meet Thomas Cain

I've been a member of the NMRA since 1992. The NMRA's mission is to promote the model railroad-ing community through education, standards, advocacy, and fellowship. It has been all that for me, and maybe most importantly, it has allowed me to find like-minded train folk who have become lifelong friends. One of the tremendous benefits of these friendships has been having several great friends who helped me build my model train layout. Whenever people visit my layout and admire what they see, I quickly share that I did not build it alone.

I grew up in Kansas along the Santa Fe Railroad, which started my interest in that road. I designed my layout from the prototype for realism and to provide hours of operational enjoyment for myself and my friends. Having friends who also enjoy the Santa Fe has led to several railfan trips in Illinois (and other places) to watch and photograph trains, which contributed to selecting the location for my layout. I also chose the last month of Santa Fe's existence, just before the BNSF merger, to keep all things Santa Fe and equipment as new as possible. My layout runs from Joliet to Streator, Illinois, only



a 55-mile section of Santa Fe's Transcon. Still, I have identified several locations along the route to highlight running and operations. The two-track layout supports high-speed priority and Amtrak trains but also has to allow for local service to seven specific locations on the layout. It keeps the dispatcher and operators busy to make all that happen!

When it comes to modeling, I have a standard for some specific details, such as no molded-on handrails, grabs, or ladders on rolling stock. All rolling stock must have

metal wheels, and all couplers are Kadee standard No. 5 couplers. I weather all rolling stock, but somehow, I continue to find some cars missing that weathering, so I still have work to do. When it comes to scenes on the layout, I prefer to make them look more realistic instead of busy, which keeps the layout from looking toylake. Some areas on my layout are not finished, but I have done enough to earn my Scenery AP Certificate. I have six AP Certificates, and I'm working on my Cars Certificate. Two scratchbuilt cars are done, and I'm almost finished with my third. I'm not a fast builder, but why rush when you are having fun?

I'm glad to serve on the Conformance and Standards group. I have always appreciated that when I buy new cars or locomotives for the layout, they will work well together. I also appreciate all the areas where standards are important, especially considering how many manufacturers create interesting and appealing products. My layout includes extra features such as operational signaling, and it works because of how at least a minimum of three different manufacturers' products function together successfully. I am still learning how to work with the tools of measuring dimensions and appreciate the guidance and feedback of others in the Conformance & Standards Committee. I look forward to also working on updating some areas of our Standards and Recommended Practices. 📺



2023 September MEET CONFORMANCE TEAM CONT.

Meet Dennis Snyder

Dennis built his first model, a Stanley Steamer, when he was 8. After that, he was hooked and worked to earn money to buy more models. At 11, using his earnings, he purchased a small Fleischmann train set and persuaded his dad to set up a 4x4 table in the corner of his bedroom and a 1x4 shelf around the walls. He did not have the money to buy kits, so he started scratchbuilding projects using card stock and balsa sheets. When the track plans got more involved than wiring a circle, he bought Linn Westcott's *How to Wire Your Model Railroad* (first edition), which led to a life-long interest and career in electronics. He worked for Balboa Scale Models in college, drawing plans for their wooden car kits.

Like many others, he took a long hiatus from the hobby to do a hitch in the Air Force, worked as an electronics design engineer, and raised two children. As an engineer, Dennis created over 160 new electronics products, was internationally published with more than 20 technical articles and an IEEE book chapter, and earned IEEE Life Senior Member recognition.



Living in Colorado Springs with Angie, his wife of 47 years, it is only natural that he would build his proto-freelanced 1920s-era Central Rockies Rail Road based on the scenery and railroads of the Rockies. Recently Dennis had to take down his DCC-controlled, 8x17-foot, dual-gauge HO and HOn3 CRRR layout when he and Angie downsized and moved to Lexington, South Carolina, to be near the remaining family. Still in planning is a much smaller CRRR

v2.0. Interesting how the past predicts the future as he will build his workstation in a large closet, just like in his contest-winning, "ATSF:1954" article in *Model Railroad Hobbyist*. Dennis has been active in the NMRA at the local and Region levels and regularly contributes to NMRA articles and "Research and Test Car" columns. His love of trains skipped a generation and has re-emerged in his granddaughter Sophie, who loves to visit train shows with "Poppy."

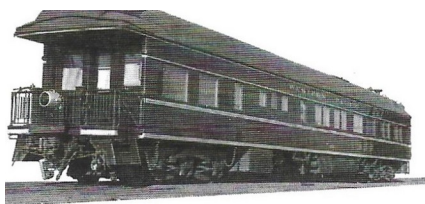
2023 September

George P. Landow earned Master Model Railroader 737.

Don Winn earned Master Model Railroader 740.

2023 October

John Robert Coy earned Master Model Railroader 730.



President's Car

NMRA President
Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Recognizing Service

It's no secret the NMRA could not operate without the hundreds of volunteers who keep the organization moving down the tracks. Each year, the NMRA recognizes our volunteers who have provided exceptional service to the organization. The President's Award for Service to Divisions acknowledges those who have helped their local Division deliver for their members. At the National Convention Banquet, I presented awards to Betty Mitchell of the Lone Star Region and Mike Arnold of the British Region. Other Service to the Division Award recipients who were not present include:

- Australasian Region, Wayne Eagle
- Mid-Continent Region, Ryan Moats, MMR®
- Mid-Central Region, Jerry Doyle
- Mid-Eastern Region, Paul Tice
- Midwest Region, Jim Osborn, MMR®
- Niagara Frontier Region, no nominee
- North Central Region, Marshall Stull
- Northeastern Region, Harold Russell, MMR®
- Pacific Coast Region, Dave Putnam
- Pacific Northwest Region, Russ Segner
- Pacific Southwest Region, Kevin Spady
- Rocky Mountain Region, Al Hovey
- Southeastern Region, Sally Bando
- Sunshine Region, Bob Leonard
- Thousand Lakes Region, Marion Manning

I present the President's Award to those volunteers who have contributed significantly to the organization. At the National Convention, I awarded Riley Triggs for his work last year on delivering the NMRA Digital Magazine and facilitating a broader representation of the scales and prototypes featured in all our publications. Gert "Speed" Muller, our IT Manager, was also presented with a President's Award for his many years of service on our IT team before becoming

IT Manager in 2021. Speed has supported several digital initiatives in the past two years, including the Digital Magazine, the implementation of Survey Monkey, the NMRA Interchange, and his continued work on the NMRA.org website replacement. Speed never seems to sleep; aside from his full-time job and commitments at the Region and Division level, he is always working on the organization's many IT challenges.

A President's Award was also presented to Andy Zimmerman, the Standards & Conformance (S&C) Manager. Andy came in to head the department at a challenging time last year with several stalled projects and disengaged volunteers and manufacturers. In a short time, Andy has reorganized his team, recruited a small army of volunteers, engaged with manufacturers, and fixed the issues with the NMRA Standards Gauge manufacturing process, meaning all scales are now back in stock. It's vital for everyone that we have a high-performing S&C department, but Andy and his team have taken this further than merely doing what we have done before; they have added new committees to improve engagement with niche sections of the hobby, including a new modular standards committee which links the modular standard owners with the technical folks working on the next generation of DCC & LCC development.

The final President's Award went to Donna Orr, Convention Chairperson for the 2023 Texas Express Convention. It is no easy task to organize a National Convention but to do so, mostly during and just after the pandemic, while also being the LSR President, is no mean feat. Donna's leadership helped her team deliver a great National Convention, with many new innovative approaches, technologies, and ways of doing things.

Donna will eventually hang up her cowgirl boots of office at the LSR, but I know she will continue to serve the NMRA in her local area for many more years.

Beyond the President's Award, the NMRA has higher tiers of recognition, and this year, your NMRA Board wishes to recognize a number of individuals with significant service to the NMRA. The NMRA wishes to recognize Milt Moore and Harold W. Russell, Jr. MMR® with Distinguished Service Awards.

Milt Moore was an NMRA Bulletin cartoonist for many years and creator of the "Thumbz" character. Milt's work was featured in most issues of the Bulletin in the 1960s and 1970s and on into the 1980s. To look at his work, go on the Members-Only website and search the old archived Bulletins from 1974 and 1975.

Milt passed away on May 29, 2023, in Gibraltar, Michigan, sad to say, but we can still enjoy his work. A short article by his good friend, Jim Zinser, MMR®, was featured in Jim's column, Division Business Car, in the June 2023 issue of the *NMRA MAGAZINE*.

Harold W. Russell Jr., MMR®, has contributed highly accurate scale drawings to *NMRA MAGAZINE* and its predecessors for decades. Harold is considered the most prolific scale drawing maker in the U.S. hobby. He was featured for many years in *Model Railroader* and *Mainline Modeler*, as well as his work for NMRA publications.

W. Monroe Stewart, MMR®, and Daisy Stewart may be unknown to most NMRA members, but they have served for 28 consecutive years in the Meetings and Train Shows Department, Monroe as National Train Show Layout Coordinator, and Daisy as National Convention administrative support staff. These activities

include working as full-time volunteer staff at each of the NMRA National Conventions over the past 28 years. In addition, Monroe has served the MER as an office and National Trustee and has been active in the Achievement Program. In recognition of their outstanding service, the NMRA recognizes them with the NMRA Fellow Award.

The highest award the NMRA can bestow is Honorary Life Membership, and the NMRA wishes to recognize three members with HLMs in 2023.

Robert J. Amsler, Jr. — Bob served five NMRA Presidents, the NMRA Board, and the officers and members of the NMRA from 2000 until 2022 as NMRA General Counsel. He concurrently served from 2009 until 2022 as Meeting and Train Shows Department Manager. Bob served for more than 20 years as NMRA General Counsel, as well as over 13 years as Meeting and Train Shows Department Manager. As an insurance attorney licensed to appear before the Missouri Supreme Court, his guidance has been invaluable in the insurance area on an ongoing basis.

His “Three Strikes” Policy, though unpopular with some members who misunderstood its legal necessity, has protected the NMRA’s membership and brand in recent years. In his role as M&TS head since 2009, he was responsible for a long string of high-quality, financially successful conventions and shows.

Ben Sevier — For 11 years with the Information Technology Department as IT Manager, when our online presence expanded geometrically, Ben was responsible for supervising our team of volunteers. He was also responsible for online Member Service Support and HQ Administrative Staff Support, guiding the total rebuild of HQ’s old FoxPro membership database into a system still in use today. Ben is still a member of the IT Team.

John Stevens — “If the Honorary Life Member Award honors members who’ve given a huge chunk of their time to the NMRA, then John Stevens is the poster child for it.” — Honors Committee

John became the National Boy Scout Coordinator for the NMRA in 2003 and continued in that position beyond 2008 when he volunteered to become Assistant Secretary for the Association, serving four years under then-Secretary Bob Gangwish. When Bob retired in 2012, John was appointed Secretary, a position in which he served until 2018. Most notably, John instituted and coordinated worldwide electronic election voting in that position. In 2018, John was elected NMRA Vice President-Administration and served in that position until 2021. At that time, he agreed to become Howell Day Museum Department Manager, a position in which he actively serves.

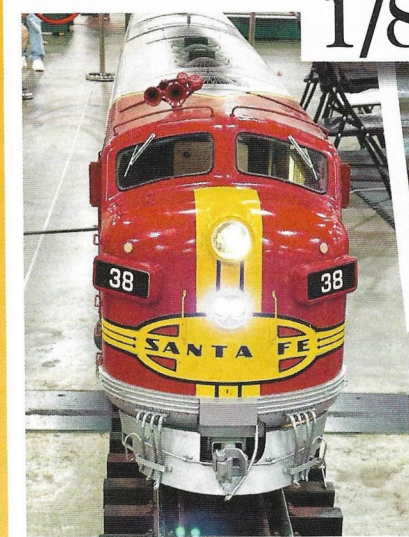
It’s true that when it comes to doing things for others, some people will stop at nothing, and I’d like to say thank you to all of you across the globe working tirelessly for the NMRA family.

Next month, I’ll focus on the Board of Directors meeting and other decisions made at the Summer Board meeting and during the National Convention in Grapevine, Texas. In October, I’ll attend the Northeastern Region, Sunshine Region, Mid-Eastern Region Conventions, and a host of other NMRA Division events. Our Central Director, Fred Soward, MMR, will attend the North Central Region Convention in Elkhart, Indiana. I hope if we have the opportunity to meet during one of these events, you’ll share with me your views on what the NMRA should continue, increase, stop, or start doing.

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” — Winston Churchill



National Train Show



1/8



Both Left: The National Train Show had trains in all scales, ranging from 1/8-scale to Z-scale. This impressive display by Danny Click and sons Cody and Casey of an ATSF ABBA F7 set included a Santa Fe Pullman-Standard dining car featuring a 3D-printed interior. The F-units are a combined 28 feet long and feature fully functional air brakes, full lighting, remote control, and sound!

— Cinthia Priest photo

Z



Below: These two T-TRAK-Z modules stood out in the sea of N-scale modules. "House On A Hill" (left) was made with Archistories "Turn Of The Century" house and garage kits and Woodland Scenics Just-Plug lights. The other one, "Fall Camping," was cast rock, 3D-printed structures, Prieser figures, miscellaneous cars, hand-made pine trees (bottle brush method), and kit-bashed aspen trees. — Cinthia Priest photo



Above: This year's National Convention Awards Banquet speaker was Spencer Christian, former host of the PBS program *Tracks Ahead* (1995–2015). Spencer connected with the audience personally, sharing career highlights and personal victories. Here, Spencer enjoys some of Speed Muller's (Texas Express OPSIG Coordinator) unique sense of humor.

Right: Donna Orr (2023 National Convention Chairman) and Michelle Kempema (Rail Tour Chair) represent the numerous Texas Express committee members who spent countless hours and tremendous effort to bring us a fantastic National Convention. Thank you all for a wonderful week! See you next year in Long Beach, California! — Both Michelle Kempema photos

Awards Banquet



2023 October Members of the National Contest Committee



Above: A few members of the National Contest team (from left to right): Bob Verkuy, Bill Brown, MMR® (National Contest Chair), Kenneth May (National Module Contest Chair), Ed O'Rourke, MMR®, Thomas Oxnard, MMR®, Paul Voelker, HLM (National Photo Contest Chair). — Peter McKenney photo

2023 November From President Gordy Robinson: David Insley

In closing, I want to recognize someone who was missed from last month's column: David Insley, Vice President of the NER and organizer extraordinaire, who I recognized with a President's Award for service to the NMRA at this year's National Convention in Grapevine, Texas. In addition to everything David does with his Region, including being the driving force behind many an initiative, including the ever-popular NERx virtual conventions, David plays a crucial role in planning for the NMRA's booth at the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield, Massachusetts. I know David would be the first person to tell you that it isn't only he who helps to organize the NMRA's presence at the Amherst Show each year, and he would be correct. However, he is the person who glues the team together, ensures meetings occur, and ensures actions are followed up on. This year, that workload was increased significantly by the National team also being at the Amherst show, and David's contribution cannot be understated.

2023 November

Steve Salotti earned Master Model Railroader 741.

Ed Smith earned Master Model Railroader 742.

2023 December

Beverly Farnham earned Master Model Railroader 737. She becomes the 11th woman to become an MMR!

Bill Yancey earned Master Model Railroader 745.

2024 January

Phil Monat earned Master Model Railroader 748.

David Crumpton earned Master Model Railroader 747.

Bruce J. Van Huis earned Master Model Railroader 746. And a note here: Bruce becomes the 4th 3-railer (inside-center 3-railer) to earn MMR. He followed: Ronald Rise, John Siegel and John Robert Coy.

There is a place for everyone in the National Model Railroad Association, including 3-railers. It's often been claimed that the NMRA is only HO. That isn't close to being an accurate assessment.

When the NMRA began in 1935, O was the most popular scale.

Harold Russell, MMR® Recognized

At the 2023 NMRA National Convention, NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR, announced that Harold had received an NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division and the NMRA Distinguished Service Award for outstanding contributions to the hobby. That puts Harold in some very elite company.

Harold is Master Model Railroader #14 and is currently the longest-serving MMR in the NMRA. He was a founding member of the Lakeshores Division in 1962, serving in officer and committee chair positions for many years, both at the Division and Region levels. He was the longtime Lakeshores' AP Chair.

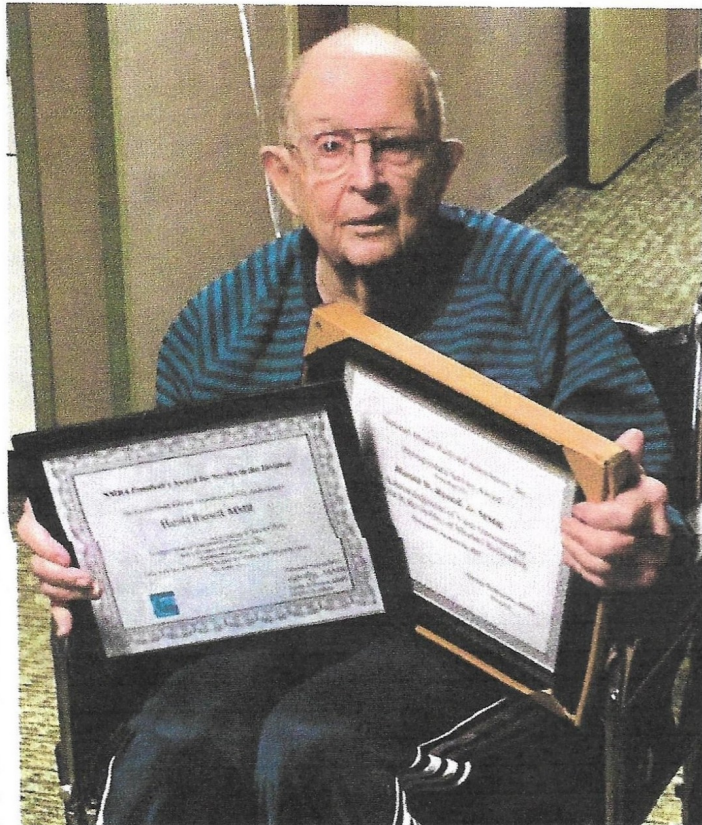
Harold is one of the most prolific contributors to the model railroading press. He has had an estimated 600-plus articles published with detailed drawings of structures, locomotives, and rolling stock since 1959.

Harold's early drawings were done with pen and ink; in 1993, he began using the computer. Many of Harold's articles and drawings have been accepted but have not yet been printed. He also wrote for *Chemical Engineering* and *Iron Age* publications.

How important were Harold's articles? He certainly influenced at least a couple of generations of individual modelers. Manufacturers have based products on his drawings, and one now-retired magazine editor admitted that interest in Harold's articles helped save the publication.

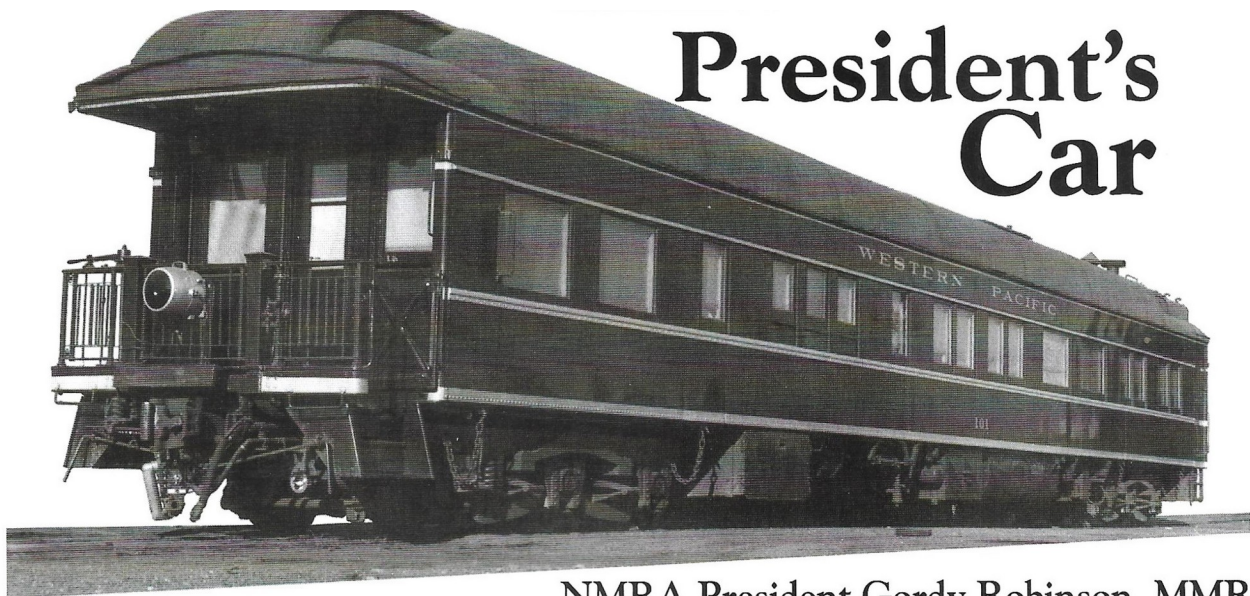
In recognition of his years of dedication to the Lakeshores Division and his contributions to the model railroading hobby, the Harold Russell Award is given to the winner of the Structures Model Contest at the annual NER Convention.

On October 15, 2023, Harold was



presented with his award certificates at the Episcopal Church Home in Rochester, New York, where he now resides. At age 91, he's as sharp as ever and still has an avid interest in railroading. NER President Ed O'Rourke, MMR®, made the presentations. Harold's family, close friends, and members of the Lakeshores Division attended the ceremony. It was a grand celebration for "Grandpa Trains."

2024 January



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Embracing the Model Railroad Journey in 2024

As we usher in the dawn of a new year, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) stands at the intersection of tradition and innovation, ready to embark on a collective journey into the heart of creativity and camaraderie, with a promise of new opportunities, new adventures, and a continued celebration of the art and craftsmanship that define our scale model railroading.

Before we eagerly roll out the fresh scenery of 2024, let's take a moment to appreciate what we achieved in 2023. Early in the year, our entire National team represented the organization at the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show in West Springfield, Massachusetts, sharing the message that our organization is ready to engage with the wider model railroad community and encouraging model railroaders to give us another try or join us for the first time. We launched the NMRA Interchange, connecting NMRA members worldwide online for the first time. In August, we held our National Convention in Grapevine, Texas, followed by one of the most successful

National Train Shows this century, with 11,000 people attending across the three days of the show.

In the fall, Lucy Dormont joined us as an engagement officer and re-connected us with model railroaders through social media. In November 2023, we created the first virtual 100% NMRA Member Club to support the N-scale modular community to develop fantastic large-scale events, the first of which will occur next year in Evanston, Wyoming, July 24-28, 2024. You can register and find out more information at <https://nscalemeet.info/>.

The past year has been a canvas of creativity, with every curve, switch, and detail we have added to our layouts and organization telling a story of dedication and imagination. Around the world, you have not only showcased technical prowess but have also introduced and shared our hobby with thousands of people.

As we enter the new year, the NMRA reaffirms its commitment to navigating the ever-evolving landscape

of model railroading. In an era where digital technologies are transforming hobbies, our association continues to embrace the opportunities presented by the digital frontier. Our online presence, including an upgraded website and an active engagement on social media, will serve as a digital roundhouse — a hub where ideas, techniques, and the sheer joy of model railroading converge. This commitment to improving our organization is not just about adapting to the times but also about expanding our reach and fostering a global community of model railroaders. The tracks we lay in cyberspace are just as vital as those on our layouts, connecting us in ways that transcend humanity's boundaries.

The allure of model railroading lies in its unique blend of tradition and innovation. As we traverse the tracks of 2024, let's keep our eyes on the horizon for innovations. Technological advancements, from cutting-edge control systems to virtual reality enhancements, are reshaping how we experience and express our love for the hobby. Digital

my mission to steer the organization toward sustainability and to position it as the epicenter of our hobby for another 90 years.

At last year's National Convention, I entrusted Magnus Christerson from the Pacific Northwest Region (PNR) with chairing a presidential committee dedicated to digital transformation and innovation within our organization and our hobby. Magnus and his team have collaborated closely with Jenny Hendricks, our Admin Manager, and her team to identify the requirements for a modern membership system and to select a preferred system and supplier.

The implementation of this new system has now commenced, despite the complexity added by our annual audit being integrated into the project plan. Such implementations are invariably intricate, and our antiquated systems pose a particular challenge. Over our 89-year history, we have amassed over 200 different membership types. While not all are currently offered, they remain part of our organizational records.

The project's focus will initially be on replacing the Access and FoxPro databases used daily with the new membership system. This new system will also power our online store, eliminating dual entry and providing a more seamless experience when joining or renewing your membership or making purchases. The existing payment issues should also be resolved.

Once these foundational tasks are established, it is my hope that we will securely integrate the membership data into our other digital systems — emails, digital publications, and website — enabling members to have one unified account. This integration will alleviate several points of frustration for those who regularly interact with our digital technology. We will also transition from end-of-

month reporting to providing secure access to compartmentalized reports for NMRA leadership worldwide.

From our starting point at the beginning of this year to the realization of this vision is a journey that I anticipate will extend well into 2025. However, we are on the correct path, and this in itself is a monumental step in the right direction.

Turning our gaze toward 2025 and our 90th anniversary, I am delighted to announce that at our 2024 NMRA Members meeting on the Thursday of our National Convention in Long Beach, we shall unveil our vision for celebrating 90 illustrious years of the NMRA. The cornerstone of this celebratory year will be our actual birthday on the U.S. Labor Day weekend in September 2025. I urge you to contemplate how your club, Division, or Region can unite to celebrate and share our beloved hobby during this momentous weekend.

Moreover, we have a dedicated team working on special branding and logos that you will be able to utilize to promote the NMRA and your events throughout the year. As always, there is a wealth of activity within our organization, driven by a fellowship of model railroaders who volunteer their time for the benefit of others worldwide. Regrettably, much of this labor is only visible to a select few, yet its impact is far-reaching.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your continued support of your fellow model railroaders. It is your passion and dedication that sustain our vibrant community and propel us toward a future brimming with promise and possibility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordy MMR". The signature is stylized, with the "G" being particularly large and looping, and the "MMR" written in a more compact, blocky style.

2024 February

Craig Mackie earned Master Model Railroader 749.

Martin Pirnat earned Master Model Railroader 750.

2024 March

Observation Car

NMRA Magazine Editor Cinthia Priest

commitment such opportunities may cost, yet I find myself saying yes more often to things I never moved on historically.

For example, this past January, I displayed some of the HO-scale freight cars I built for the NMRA's Achievement Program at the recent Cocoa Beach ProtoRails event. I had never done that before. To my astonishment, my Southern 60-foot "waffle" boxcar received the first annual "Best Model in Show" People's

Choice award in memoriam to ProtoRails founder Mike Brock. Mike was an incredible Union Pacific modeler, and I'm honored to be the first of what I hope are countless prototype modelers who carry on his memory and love of model railroading to the next generation.



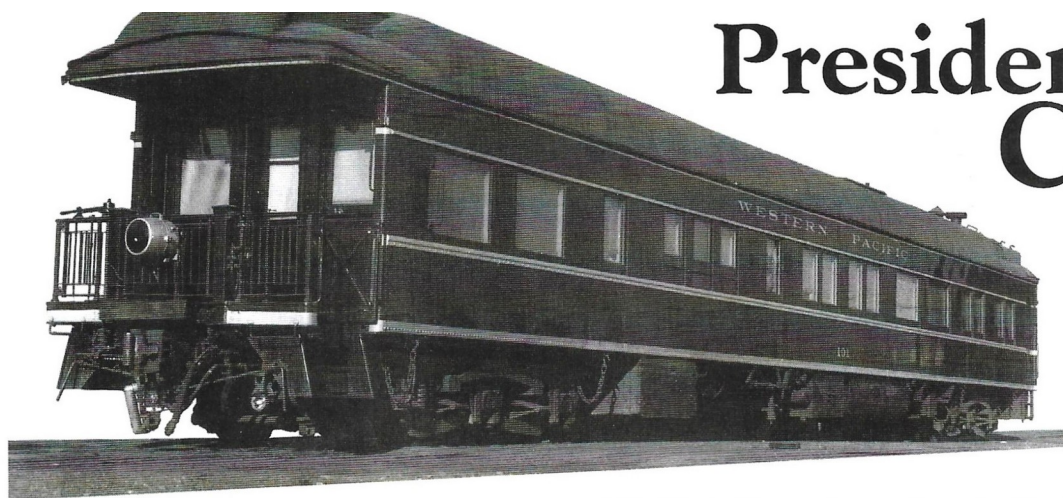
Above: Marty Megregian presents Cinthia with Mike Brock's Award. — Greg Komar

2024 March

Richard Remiarz earned Master Model Railroader 732.

Warren Smith earned Master Model Railroader 739.

Kevin Anderson earned Master Model Railroader 752.



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

I'm writing this month's column fresh from the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show, or Springfield, as it's better known, even though the event is in West Springfield, Massachusetts. If you have never been to this train show, it's one of the year's premium events, with this year's record-breaking attendance being 26,000 across two days. There are 350,000 square feet of trains across four buildings, and put simply, two days is not enough time to see everything.

Lucy Dormont (Social Media and Engagement Manager) and I tried our best to run around on both days and grab as much content as possible to tell the world about the National Model Railroad Association and what was happening at the show. It was a daunting task, and at the end of Saturday, I had covered 17,500 steps, with Lucy probably doing even more. We announced the award of the 2026 National Convention to Chattanooga, Tennessee, with a bid from the Southeastern Region in partnership with ScaleTrains.com.

Throughout the event, there were many conversations with model railroaders, members, our Partners, and other vendors. Still, one stood out to me, and that was late on Saturday after-

noon with Stacey Walthers Naffah, who asked me what the one selling point of the NMRA was. It should be a simple question to answer, but it is not.

For me, the National Model Railroad Association distinguishes itself through its commitment to providing a comprehensive and supportive platform for model railroaders worldwide. That means we have to have a multifaceted approach to supporting model railroaders at every stage of their journey, fostering a sense of community, promoting excellence, and adapting to the changing landscape of the hobby. It is an oversimplification of what it means to be a member of the organization to suggest there is one unique selling point of membership.

I know none of you need reminding, but I usually describe what it means to benefit from membership by using the following points, knowing at least one will be the missing link the modeler needs to have that support platform to enjoy their hobby.

Education and Standards: The NMRA is dedicated to educating model railroaders and setting industry standards. Offering structured educational programs and promoting standardized practices, the association promotes a

high level of quality and consistency in the model railroading community.

Community-Building: The NMRA fosters a sense of community among model railroaders through local divisions, events, and online platforms. This sense of fellowship encourages networking, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas among model railroaders, creating a supportive environment for both beginners and experienced modelers.

Resource Hub: Serving as a centralized resource hub, the NMRA provides members access to a wealth of information, including publications, clinics, videos, workshops, and guidelines. This comprehensive repository supports model railroaders in honing their skills, staying informed about the latest hobby trends, and navigating the various aspects of the hobby.

Recognition and Awards: The NMRA recognizes outstanding contributions to the hobby through awards and accolades. By celebrating achievements in model railroading, the association encourages excellence, innovation, and a continuous pursuit of mastery within the community.

Advocacy for the Hobby: The NMRA actively advocates for the model

railroading hobby on a broader scale. This activity involves promoting the hobby to new audiences, engaging with manufacturers on relevant issues, and preserving the heritage and history of model railroading.

Events and Conventions:

Hosting Region, National, and international events, the NMRA provides model railroaders with opportunities to showcase their work, participate in contests, attend clinics, and connect with like-minded individuals. These events contribute to the vibrancy and dynamism of the model railroading community.

Commitment to Innovation:

Recognizing the evolving nature of the hobby, the NMRA embraces technological advancements and encourages innovation. By staying at the forefront of new developments, the association ensures its members have the tools and knowledge to keep their layouts current and engaging.

In essence, the NMRA's unique selling point lies in its multifaceted approach to supporting model railroaders at *every* stage of their journey, fostering a sense of community, promoting excellence, and adapting to the changing landscape of the hobby. However, I see Stacey's point; it's difficult from the outside to get that message across. Maybe we should talk more about membership being a comprehensive and supportive platform for model railroaders rather than adding too much specificity to the conversation with a prospective member.

Talking of that great platform and experience, have you remembered to use the benefits more than 65 model railroad businesses give you for being an NMRA member? If you save \$1 with each partner, you will have recovered your membership cost. Are you using the


NMRA INTERCHANGE and *NMRA TURNTABLE* to engage with other NMRA members and the latest techniques in the hobby? Ultimately, are you engaging with other members to enjoy the fellowship of membership?

There is no time like now to embrace all the good that comes from being part of the only worldwide model railroad organization, to push forward your model railroading journey, and to get the maximum enjoyment from the hobby. So go to that local train show, attend your local Division meeting, give them another go or go for the first time, and if you can, volunteer and give back to the community.

Have you never been to a National Convention? This year's National Convention, the SurfLiner, will be in Long Beach, California, in August 2024; it's about time to complete your registration and travel plans. A National Convention is a great place to enjoy our hobby, with something for everyone. It should be on your model railroad bucket list if you have never been before, just like a trip to the Amherst Railway Hobby Show.

Where is all this going? Simply put, the NMRA is a fellowship; if you don't participate, it can't be a reliable platform to support you and others to enjoy the hobby to the fullest.

Get out there and enjoy it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordy NMRA". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Gordy" written in a cursive-like script and "NMRA" in a more straightforward, blocky font.

2024 March

Remembering Bill Neale, MMR®

Article by Scott Kremer, MMR®

On December 28, 2023, the model railroad community lost a great modeler and, more importantly, a friend to many of us when Bill Neale passed away after a brief illness. Bill was 74.

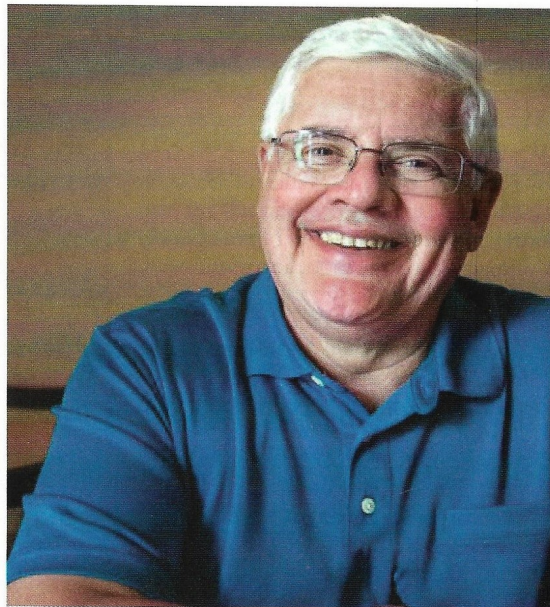
Like many of us, Bill started his model railroad interest at a young age. One of the first things he did while still a teenager was to become a life member of the NMRA. Bill went to Purdue University, obtaining a degree in computer science, with a major in math and a minor in history. While at Purdue, he was active in the Purdue Model Railroad Club, where he met Tony Koester, Bill Darnaby, Ron Burkhardt, and several other model railroaders who became lifelong friends. Upon graduation, Bill married his love, Terry, whom he met in high school in Anderson, Indiana.

After graduation, Bill worked for a while for the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors in LaGrange, Illinois. Later, he worked for EDS, Hewlett Packard, and General Motors in different positions, including Account Manager and Program Manager. While living in Chicago, Bill became a founding member of the Midwest Railroad Modelers Club, also known as the "Batavia Club." Bill often said he learned how to hand-lay track and scratchbuild turnouts through the abundant practice he got at the Batavia Club — practice he put to good use his whole life on his layout and in helping others.

After a move or two, Bill, Terry, and their two daughters settled in Farmington Hills, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. He and Terry found a wonderful home with adequate space for a model railroad. That's the way Bill put it. It included an exceptional backyard that supported Terry's gardening interests and their love of bird-watching. Here is where Bill created his layout depicting the "Panhandle" portion of the Pennsylvania Railroad, including Weirton, West Virginia, and Steubenville, Ohio. The layout is set in 1939 and is all steam. The layout is partially double-decked and has a large amount of staging trackage to support the operations Bill so loved. Bill could stage as many as 26 trains, and operating sessions were always fun. During COVID-19, Bill took advantage of the time and completed his signal system and the related towers necessary to his Pennsy layout. Bill's layout was essentially complete.

For the past 20-plus years, Bill was a member of the Midnight Pocatello Yardmasters, a round-robin group in Southeast Michigan. Bill completed his Master Model Railroader® (#480) during those years, making him one of eight in the group to achieve that level. Bill hosted more

BILL NEALE TRIBUTE



than his fair share of operating sessions. His sessions, employing about 12 people, were sought after because they were very prototypical and interesting. Bill regularly hosted operators who came from around the country.

In addition to his love of model railroading, Bill was a well-known and acknowledged expert on the Pennsylvania Railroad. He was a member and regular article contributor to the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society.

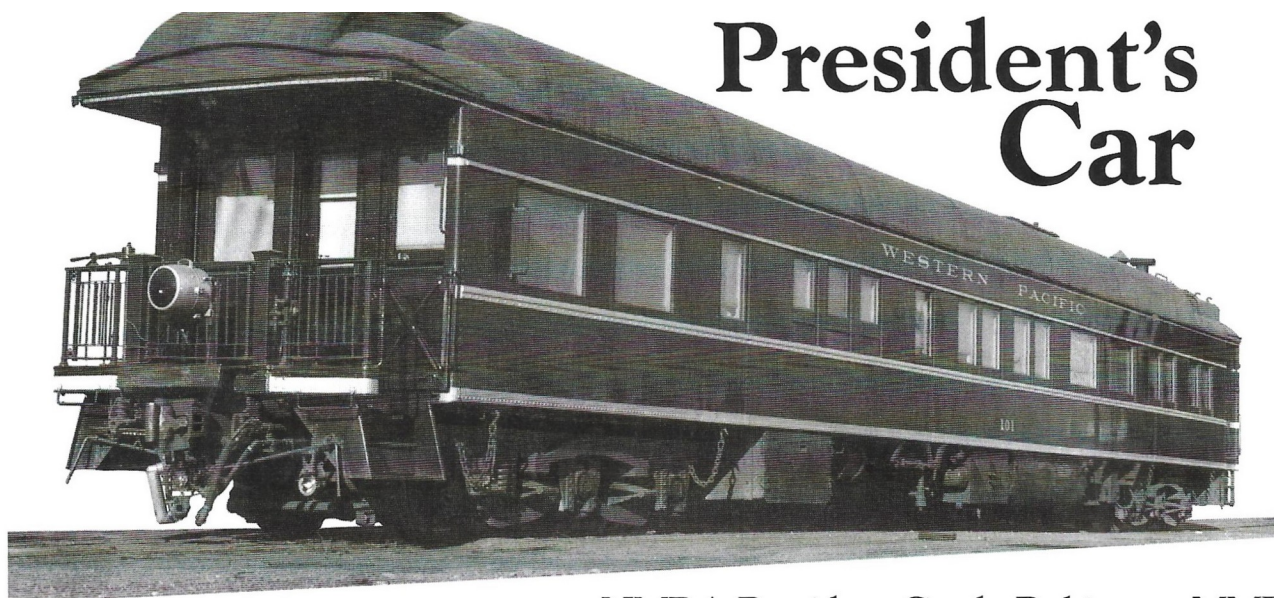
Bill was an outstanding layout designer. He had an article in *Model Railroad Planning* every year for several years. Bill helped many people design or modify their layouts. He had a gift for understanding what people wanted, working to develop a plan that would work to provide them satisfaction for years to come.

Bill was a member of several Special Interest Groups — OPSIG (operations), LDSIG (layout design), and the Steel SIG. He was a member of Div. 6 of the North Central Region of the NMRA, where he held various offices over the years. Bill had also been the Central Division Director of the NMRA. In many ways, Bill lived up to the pledge that is part of the MMR® application to use his skills and energy to benefit the hobby and the modelers he met.

While all of us will miss the operating sessions and working together on layouts, Bill's wonderful attitude is what we will miss most. He was always positive, helpful, and a joy to be with. 🚂



PRR No. 7504 at Hanlin on Bill's layout. — Craig Wilson photo



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Since the winter Board of Directors meeting and the Amherst “Springfield” Train Show, it’s been a very busy time for the National team and me, so we have lots to cover in this month’s column: a fantastic new member benefit, work to return one of your favorite events lost during the COVID pandemic, and a further explanation of why the 2024 National Train Show was moved from its anticipated venue into the convention hotel.

So, let’s start with the National Train Show. The members of the National team who plan the show made the Board of Directors aware of significant additional costs due to union labor costs if the event was to be held at the Long Beach Convention Center. These costs would not only be applied to the show setup but also to individual vendors. Faced with the prospect of significant losses of over \$200,000 and additional costs to vendors resulting in the likely cancellation of attendance by several manufacturers and vendors, the Board of Directors determined to relocate the event away from the Long Beach Convention Center.

The executive committee has worked with the SurfLiner 2024 organizers and

has been unable to find another suitable venue except for the convention hotel itself. The result will be a smaller show, but at least we can still have a National Train Show. One major benefit of this is having layouts in the convention hotel outside the ballroom, which hosts many events during the convention. This 10,000-square-foot space will have layouts, which we plan to rotate during the week to allow as many layouts/modules to be displayed as possible.

Vendors and manufacturers can set up in an indoor space or on the pavilion outside both areas located on the hotel’s third floor. The outdoor space is shaded throughout the day by the hotel itself. This will allow for a total space of approximately 35,000 square feet for the National Train Show.

Next, it’s been my desire since the WISE Division decided it could no longer support Trainfest — the country’s largest operating train show — to bring this back as an NMRA event. The executive team has held conversations with the leadership of the WISE and Midwest Region and is actively working to bring back the Trainfest event at the Wisconsin State Fair Park Exposition Center in

West Allis, Wisconsin, in 2025 and beyond. This event will form a central part of the NMRA 90th Anniversary celebrations. We are still working through the specifics of the event and what could be done to utilize the entire available space. We will soon seek to form a national committee of volunteers to help bring Trainfest to life.

Moving on from train shows and back to member benefits for all, the National team has been working on teaming up with a company called Grouper, which fights social isolation and inactivity in the over-65 community by helping eligible persons benefit from support from your medical insurance to fund social activities such as model railroading. If you are over 65 with a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may be eligible to have the total cost of your NMRA membership reimbursed by Grouper, even if you are an existing member or life member.

Yes, that’s right. It is effectively free NMRA membership; you only need to apply to check your eligibility and then periodically tell Grouper how you engage with the hobby. I think this is a fantastic opportunity to grow the NMRA and to

2024 April

President Report Cont.

help those on fixed incomes with the cost of the hobby. We all know model railroaders live longer and happier lives within our community.

We'll announce how you can check if you are eligible for this fantastic offer about the same time this issue is published, so please keep an eye open for it.

I mentioned earlier that Trainfest would be part of the NMRA's 90th Anniversary celebrations, but we are looking for you to suggest other ways to celebrate. Is your club also 90 next year? Are you planning a local event in your Region or Division to celebrate this milestone? Would you like to help plan and deliver the NMRA's 90th Anniversary celebrations? If so, please contact me before June 1 so we can present a full plan of events back to the Board of Directors.

However, before we get to 2025, we still have plenty of time in 2024 to enjoy our hobby, so let's not forget that there is no time like right now to register for the Surfliner 2024 NMRA National Convention in Long Beach, California. You'll enjoy a whole week of clinics, contests, layout tours, prototype tours, Special Interest Groups, and much more. Register today at surfliner2024.org.

For the N-scalers among us, there is still time to sign up for the huge

N-scale modular event in Evanston, Wyoming, from July 25 to 28. This event, held in the old railroad shops buildings, will have space for all three N-scale modular standards and a substantial 1,800-foot-long Free-moN layout. You can find more information at nscalemeet.info.

Because of COVID, we never held an event to officially open the NMRA museum exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. On July 31, 2024, the NMRA will hold an event at the museum to celebrate our exhibit and the people who helped make this a reality. We'll have more information about this event as we get closer, but it will undoubtedly be a busy summer.

Finally, several Region conventions are still to take place this year, so check out when your home Region is holding its event and see if you can add that to your model railroading calendar. I hope to see you at one of the many modeling events throughout 2024.

There's much more to come from your National team; stay tuned.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordy MMR". The signature is stylized, with the "G" and "M" being particularly large and bold.

2024 April

Brian Ferris earned Master Model Railroader 751.

2024 April

DEAN DICKERHOOF TRIBUTE

In Memoriam: Dean Dickerhoof

Roland Lawrence

Dean W. Dickerhoof was born in Akron, Ohio, on November 9, 1935. Dean earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Akron. While attending that college, he met Joy, whom he married on August 27, 1958. The couple moved to Chicago so Dean could continue his education, earning a master's and doctorate in chemistry from the University of Illinois. Upon graduation, Dean accepted a teaching position at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado. He taught undergraduate and graduate chemistry at Mines until his retirement in 2004. Dean and his wife moved to Midland, Texas, to live out their retirement years. Dean passed away on January 9, 2024.

Dean fell in love with trains at a young age. He rode on trains, as well as photographed, read about, and modeled trains. He especially loved the Union Pacific. Dean's daughters, Katerina and Cheryl, recall fond memories of family vacations following various train tracks, trips into Denver, Colorado, to visit hobby shops, and their dad's generosity with all he had collected.

NMRA Achievement Program

Association Volunteer – Dean served the NMRA for 19 years (1991–2011) as Display Floor Manager for the National Train Show, which occurs at the end of the annual NMRA National Convention. He was responsible for the modules and displays (M&D) at the shows.



Above: Dean accepting his Association Volunteer Certificate. — Paul Brennecke photo



Above: Dean prepares to give his clinic on Looking Back at UP Diesels. — Paul Brennecke photo

Model Railroad Author – Dean wrote numerous articles for the Union Pacific Historical Society's publication, *The Streamliner*. His articles included: "UP F3s" (January 1985); "SW Switcher Assignments in Denver" (January 1986); "251 Territory" (two photos, pg. 9 and 13 - January 1987); "Alco FAs Part 1" (July 1987); "Alco FA/FBs Part 2" (April 1988); "UP Express Box Cars" (4th Qtr 1989); "The Joseph Schick Collection" (Vol. 7); and "Denver Steam Operation" (Vol. 14).

NTRAK

Dean was also a member of NTRAK, joining the group in the 1970s. His corner module was built around 1977. One of the NTRAK publications has an overhead photo of Dean's module at the 1977 Denver NMRA National Convention.

His corner module was also featured on page 32 of the NTRAK "How-To" book published in 1984. That feature included a photo of the module, the track plan, and details about its construction.

Dean's friend, Kent Charles, remembers the first time he saw Dean's NTRAK module at the Jeffco Fair Grounds, where the NRHS held an annual train show. Dean was a member of the NRHS and arranged for NTRAK participation in the show. His

module caught Kent's attention because all the industries were named after famous chemists or scientists. One memorable name was Avogadro's.

As a member of the NRHS, Dean participated in several of their train rides as a car host or car captain. These trains used Union Pacific locomotives and coaches and usually went from Denver, Colorado, to Laramie, Wyoming, where UP crews wye'd the engine for the return trip to Denver. Dean was also a longtime member of the Forney N Scale Club and helped with the construction and operation of that layout until it was dismantled.

After Kent built his first NTRAK module, he and Dean traveled together to many shows. One of Kent's most memorable trips with Dean was to the first N-Scale National Convention in Houston, Texas, in 1983. Kent drove his old green pickup, and Dean navigated. Dean had a thick black binder full of notes about all the places and depots he wanted to photograph along the route; places like Gene Autry, Oklahoma. His organizational skills and attention to detail were impressive. They also traveled together to several NMRA conventions to participate in the NTRAK layout as part of the National Train Show. Dean became interested in the National Train Show and joined the staff. He was really enthusiastic about each show and spent countless hours planning and overseeing the modules and displays.

Dean's dedication to his family and the hobby will surely be missed by all.

Robert (Bob) Gangwish

21 August 1934 - 07 February 2024

Andy J. Zimmerman

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on August 21, 1934, Robert (Bob) Gangwish moved to Miami, Florida, in 1944. After serving six years in the U.S. Army, he concluded his military career as a battalion operations NCO and received an honorable discharge in 1963. Following his Army service, Bob attended the University of Miami, graduating in 1965.

Post-graduation, he dedicated himself to community service. He became the Personnel Director for Metro-Dade County from 1965 until his retirement in 1992 from the Metro-Dade Police Department, where he served as an Executive Officer.

Upon retirement, Bob settled in Frostproof, Florida, from 1992 until his passing in 2024. Survived by his daughters Vickie Gangwish and Leslie (Darrell) McKee, along with three grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, Bob's legacy extended through his family.

Bob's passion for model railroading was evident in his community involvement, earning him various accolades during his tenure:

- Sunshine Region President (2004–2006)
- SSR *Journal Box* editor (2003–2012)
- NMRA Secretary (2007–2012)

National Awards:

- Fellow of the NMRA Award (2009)
- NMRA President's Award (2005, 2012)
- Honorary Life Member Award #59 (2013)

Bob also achieved the following certificates in the Achievement Program:

- Association Volunteer (2006)
- Association Official (2006)
- Model Railroad Author (2006)

Additionally, he actively participated in the Lake Wales Model Railroad Club as Secretary, Sebring Model Railroad Club, and Ridge Model Railroad Club in Winter Haven. Bob's enduring contributions to the NMRA and the model railroading community are a testament to his dedication and passion for the hobby.

Quoting from a local newspaper article (*The Ledger*), "In 1999, speaking on Gangwish's honor from the NMRA, Historic Society of Lake Wales President Mimi Hardman called him 'an outstanding gentleman who has volunteered thousands of hours, and he doesn't even live in Lake Wales.'



Above: Bob Gangwish of the Lake Wales Model Railroad Club shows off an HO-scale railroad display at the yellow depot on Scenic Highway in Lake Wales. Gangwish was recently named Volunteer of the Year by the National Model Railroad Association. With him is Mimi Hardman, president of the Historic Society of Lake Wales. — Image courtesy of *The Ledger*

"She said Gangwish is known in model railroading circles throughout the Eastern U.S., where he attends regional meetings 'to represent our club. We are so thankful to have him in a leadership role.'

"Hardman added that not only does Gangwish work with the miniature trains, but he and fellow club members also help with renovations of historic corridor buildings and the vintage train cars at the Depot Museums.

"He has lent his time, energies and money for the benefit of east Polk County and Highlands County. He is a great leader for telling about the history of railroading. He goes to the schools to speak and he's a great gift to Lake Wales,' she said.

"With all of those activities, retirement has gone by the wayside for Gangwish, but model railroading involvement is every bit as rewarding as any job.

"It's an education in building and operating a model railroad, and the friendships I have made,'" ("LW man working on the railroad, Meet Bob Gangwish" by William Bygrave, *The Ledger*, August 13, 1999).

Model railroading has lost an icon who believed in mentorship, fellowship and community. He lived it and shared it wherever he went. *This* is why people join the NMRA, so they can get to know and work with people like Robert (Bob) Gangwish.

2024 May

Can Grouper Help Cover Your Annual NMRA Dues?

Article by Gordy Robinson, MMR®

The model railroad community has long been celebrated for its ability to foster social connections and combat social isolation. Model railroaders often gather at clubs, exhibitions, and conventions to share their passion, exchange ideas, and build friendships. These interactions go beyond mere hobby discussions; they provide a sense of belonging and camaraderie that can significantly enhance one's quality of life.

In an increasingly interconnected world, the importance of social connection cannot be overstated. It's not just about having friends or acquaintances; social interaction plays a crucial role in our mental, emotional, and even physical well-being. Recognizing this, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) proudly announces a groundbreaking partnership with Grouper.

Grouper is a radically new benefit from your current health plan that recognizes the profound social benefits of activities like model railroading. They partner with Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans to cover the annual NMRA Membership Dues for eligible members aged 65 and above.

This means that our eligible members can continue to enjoy the benefits of NMRA membership without worrying about the financial burden.

But Grouper's benefits extend far beyond financial assistance. By incentivizing participation in model railroading and other social activities, Grouper encourages members to prioritize their social well-being, improving overall health and happiness. Research has shown that social isolation and loneliness can have detrimental effects on both mental and physical health, increasing the risk of conditions such as depression, anxiety, and cardiovascular disease. Grouper promotes a healthier, more fulfilling lifestyle for NMRA members by providing opportunities for social engagement and connection through cost savings.

Moreover, the partnership between NMRA and Grouper is not just about individual benefits; it's about strengthening the fabric of our community as a whole. Model railroading is more than just a hobby; it's a shared passion that brings people together from all walks of life. By fostering a sense of community and belonging, we create a supportive environment where

members can thrive and grow personally and professionally.

Members aged 65 and above with an eligible health plan can easily sign up for Grouper at www.hellogrouper.com/NMRA by providing their current health plan details. Once they confirm your health plan's eligibility, Grouper will send a check to pay the annual dues. Plus, as long as your plan includes Grouper and you remain an active model railroader, your dues will be covered annually.

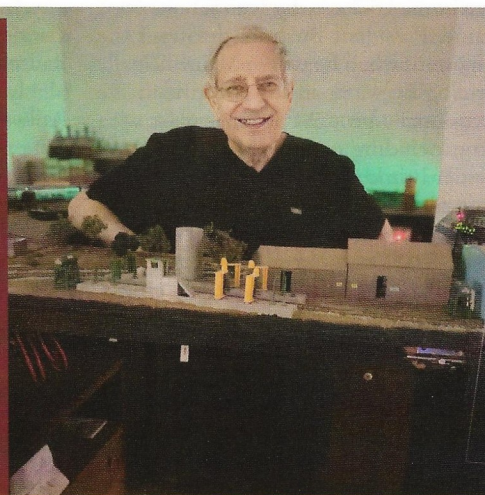
Our partnership with Grouper is about more than just covering membership dues; it's about empowering our members to live their best lives. By embracing the power of social fitness through model railroading, we can improve our overall health and well-being while enjoying the camaraderie and companionship of fellow enthusiasts. Whether you're a seasoned model railroader or new to the hobby, there's never been a better time to connect with others and explore the joys of model railroading.

So, join us in embracing the power of social connection and community. Sign up for Grouper today and see how your health plan can reward you for something you already knew — model railroading is good for your health.

You may have questions about this benefit, our partnership, or the signup process, and Grouper is here to help. They have a dedicated Member Engagement team ready to answer your questions and help you through the signup process. Contact them by calling (833) 519-1078 or emailing nmra@hellogrouper.com. You can also check out the online FAQ to learn more about this exciting new social fitness benefit.

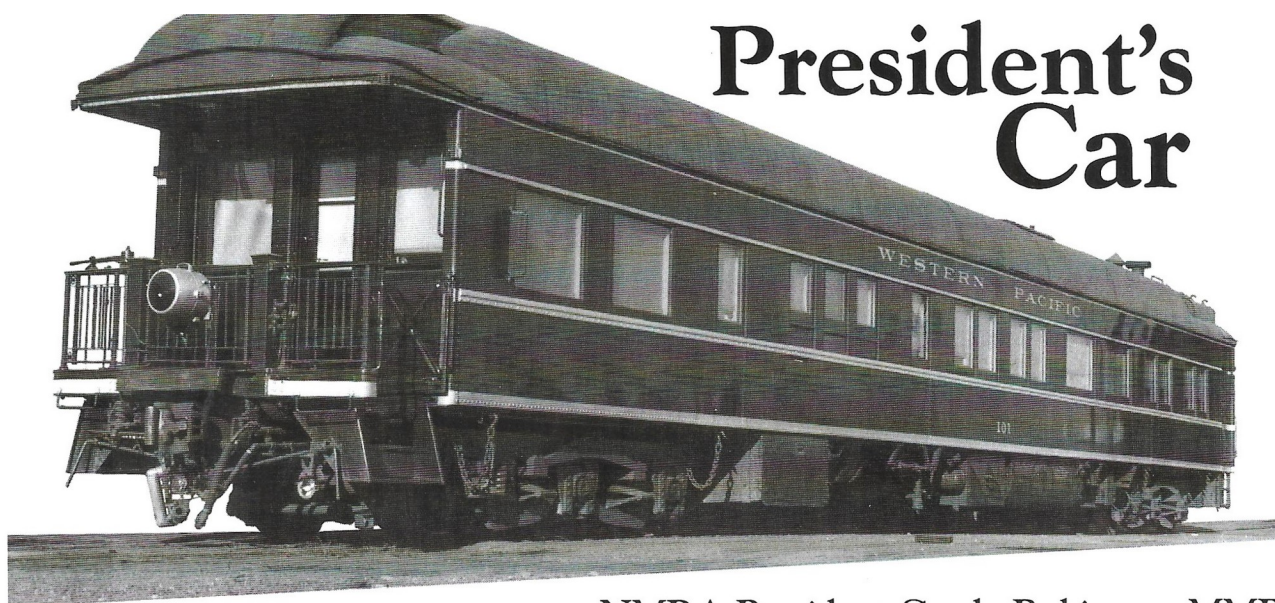
The partnership between NMRA and Grouper represents a significant step forward in promoting social well-being and enhancing the lives of our members. We are excited to bring this amazing opportunity to our community and look forward to sharing more about the power of social fitness through model railroading!

• SCAN NOW TO
SIGN UP FOR
GROUPER •



GROUPER IS AN OFFICIAL PARTNER OF THE
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

2024 May



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Next year is the NMRA's 90th Anniversary, a milestone worthy of celebration. When you look back at the Association's achievements since being founded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on Labor Day weekend in 1935, it is truly remarkable how far it has come. That original primary goal to promote the hobby of model railroading and establish standards for model railroad equipment and operations hasn't changed since those early days. The NMRA has stayed true to its core mission over the decades, acting as a driving force in advancing and unifying the model railroading community.

Except for 1945, during World War II, and 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Association has held an annual national gathering of model railroaders every single year. This upcoming summer, we will hold our National Convention in Long Beach, California, from August 4–11. Registrations are looking very promising, and it should be another fantastic opportunity for modelers from across the country to come together, learn from one another, and share their passion, just as our founders did back in 1935. These conventions are the heartbeat of the NMRA, a chance to celebrate our shared hobby and forge new connections.

One of the NMRA's significant achievements that cannot be overstated is the development and maintenance of our now-famous model railroading standards. A dedicated team of volunteers has worked tirelessly over the years to establish and update these standards, allowing for seamless standardization across the hobby. These standards have ensured compatibility and interoperability among different manufacturers and products from all corners of the globe. Without these efforts, the model railroading world would be a fragmented landscape, with each company operating in its own silo. Instead, we have a cohesive and interconnected community where enthusiasts can mix and match components from various brands, secure in the knowledge that they will work together harmoniously.

Moreover, the NMRA has played an integral role in education within the hobby throughout the years. From publishing informative materials and hosting clinics to hands-on learning opportunities through the Achievement Program and Modeling With The Masters® initiatives, the Association has been instrumental in sharing knowledge and fostering growth among model railroaders of all skill lev-

els. This commitment to education has not only helped individuals improve their modeling abilities, but has also contributed to the overall advancement and evolution of the hobby itself.

As we look ahead to next year and the NMRA's 90th Anniversary, the celebration will extend far beyond just the 2025 National Convention in Novi, Michigan, near Detroit. The National team is also working in collaboration with the previous organizers of TrainFest to bring this major model railroading show back onto the calendar, adding another exciting event to the anniversary festivities.

However, the NMRA recognizes there is always room for more celebration and involvement from the grassroots level. Local Divisions and Regions are encouraged to brainstorm and plan events and activities to commemorate this significant milestone. The NMRA will even provide up to \$200 in matching funds to each Division to help facilitate retention events. If you or your local group have already started planning something or have an idea for how the NMRA should celebrate its 90th Anniversary, the National team would love to hear about it. If you are among the rare individuals who have a

great idea and the time and willingness to help bring it to fruition, please reach out and get involved.

Throughout its rich history, the NMRA has played a crucial role in fostering creativity, innovation, and camaraderie within the model railroad-ing hobby. While the Association will undoubtedly continue to fulfill that important mission, it is equally vital to take a moment and celebrate the remarkable achievements that have been accomplished over the past nine decades. Please share your thoughts, ideas, and plans with your local leadership and the National team, as this Anniversary belongs to the entire NMRA community.

Beyond the 90th Anniversary preparations, the National team has been hard at work on several other initiatives to improve the member experience. Efforts are underway to ensure that a National Train Show can still be held, albeit in a smaller venue. Additionally, a recent member survey sought feedback on the future direction of the NMRA, with input being gathered from members, non-members, manufacturers, and the Board of Directors. This collective feedback will help shape the Association's vision for 2030 and beyond.

Significant efforts are also being made to add additional member benefits. The NMRA has recently partnered with many new companies through its partnership program, providing members exclusive discounts and offerings. Furthermore, a substantial new benefit has been launched for eligible members over 65. As detailed in this month's issue, this benefit could potentially cover the full cost of an NMRA membership through reimbursement from eligible Medicare Advantage insurance providers. While not all members may qualify immediately, the NMRA's long-term partnership with

Grouper aims to expand the benefit's availability as more insurance providers are added, ensuring that retiring members on fixed incomes can continue to enjoy the advantages of NMRA membership without financial strain.

Finally, by the time you read this, the NMRA's IT and web team, led by Speed Muller, will hopefully have launched a new online store built on updated software. This overhaul aims to resolve many members' issues with PayPal and membership renewals. It is also a crucial step toward enabling the NMRA to offer an option for spreading the membership cost across 12 monthly installments, a feature that will undoubtedly benefit a significant portion of the membership and help prevent lapses due to forgetfulness. Once the online store project is complete, the team will focus on revamping the NMRA's main website. If you possess Drupal 9 or web development experience, please consider volunteering your skills to the IT Department by contacting Speed Muller using the information provided in the *NMRA MAGAZINE* and website.

Just as I am sure many of you have at home, the NMRA has many projects at the local and national levels to provide model railroaders with the best experience. I hope whatever you have planned for May, you enjoy it with your fellow NMRA members. There are a few Region conventions this month, still a few train shows, and with the first shoots of spring, maybe it's time to get out railfanning in some nicer weather.

Thank you for whatever you do this month for your fellow model railroaders and for supporting the National Model Railroad Association.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordy Muller". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Gordy" written in a cursive-like script and the last name "Muller" in a more straightforward, blocky style.

2024 May

William Fassett earned Master Model Railroader 756.

Dan Figy earned Master Model Railroader 757.

Jeff Herrmann earned Master Model Railroader 758.

2024 June

Phillip Burnside earned Master Model Railroader 754.

Don Cipolla earned Master Model Railroader 760.

25 Year NMRA Anniversary 2023

Roy Allen
Mark Mathu
Bill Aulicino
Robert McBean
Bruce Backus
Keith McCarron
Robert Bartizek
Jerome McDonald
Gary Bartlett
Peter McKenney
Richard Beck
E Merkel MMR
Bill Benzing
Matthew Metoyer
Martin Brechbiel, MMR®
Franklin Miller
Tim Bristow
Bonnie Moe
Richard Bronson
Richard Mueller
Dan Brown
Robert Murray
Harold Buhler
Robert Nalbone Jr
Terry Burkhardt
Don Newman

Brian Clark
Martin Oakes
Kenton Colvin
Tim O'Fallon
Peter Cornelisse
David O'Hearn, MMR®
Don Crabtree
Gregory Ohlmacher
Tom Crawford
Thomas Oxnard, MD
Stanley Davis
Jonathan Paretsky
James DeBree, Jr
Edwin Pennington
William Demas
Andrew Reid
Wesley Dorman III
Richard Remiarz, MMR®
Frank Duff
Larry Reynolds
Mike Ellsbury
Dave Roeder, MMR®
John Fallon
Garth Rooney
Mark Fenbers
Stuart Sabatini

Claude Franklin
Gregory Shindledecker
Allen Frasch
Rudolf Slovacek
Neal Gearhart
Kenneth Smith
Kevin Geiser
George Stevens
Dennis Gerloff
Leon Thiem
Joseph Golab
Thomas Thiem
Joel Goldberg, MMR®
Geoffrey Tiller
Patrick Grace
Les Trainor
Gary Hankins, MMR®
William Tulley, MMR®
David Houseman
David Vinci
Michael Humble
Edward Wagner
Gary Hunley
Richard Walz
James Irwin
Andrew Wasowicz

Donald Jackson
Dennis Whitaker
Michael Jones
Kim Wickham
John Kallman
Don Wilhoit
Alexander Karol
David Williams
Tom Katafiasz
Dayna Williamson
Martin Klein
Derek Wimberly
David Kullman
Mark Wittrup
Larry Kurkowski
John Zuba
John Levesley
Mark Lewalski
Kerry Lindenbaum
Terry Ludwig
Jack Lutz
Timothy Maier
Gerald Martin

2024 June

50 Year NMRA Anniversary 2023

William Achinger
William Adams
Alan Aicher
Doug Alexander
Clyde Anderson
Edward Appenzeller
Andrew Archer
Don Augustine
Andrew Austin
James Bando
Cornell Barkhurst
Charles Bash
Ronald Batory
Ronald Bennell
Brian Biggar
Arthur Boyd
Brendan Brosnan
J Buchanan
Bob Bullen
Leon Butler, Jr
Robert Castiglione
Laroye Chisley
Charles Compton
Bob Connell
William Cowan
Stephen Culbertson
John Curtiss
Robert Czerwinski
Richard Daniels
Doc Donaldson
Phil Doolittle
John Erickson
Ray Evers
Robert Farrenkopf
Thomas Fava
Elliot Fishbein
B. Geilman
Walter Getze
Bob Gifford
James Givens, Jr
Charles Goss, Jr
Robert Griffin
Robert Griswold
Steven Gust

Ronald Hall
Geoffrey Hamway
Kenneth Hanawalt
Dan Harris
Myles Haws
James Head
Michael Heine
William Henry
Ronald Herfurth
Scott Hewis
Harvey Heyser III
Roger Hildebrandt
Eugene Hill
Peter Hirz
Christopher Hitchins
Joe Holbrook
Christopher Holmes
David Horst
Don Jackson
Robert Jekel, MMR®
Roger Jensen
William Johnson
M Johnson
John Kane
Christopher Kavanagh
Alan Keesling
Keith Knapp
Philip Knife
Roger Krause
Robert Laidlaw
Robert Lang
Tony Langhart
Richard Laube
John Laurie, DVM
Randall Lee
Harry Leidich
Eric Levin
Paul Lewis
David Libby
Stephen Lichtman
Jon Lindgren
William Low
Niall M Mackay
David MacPherson, MMR®

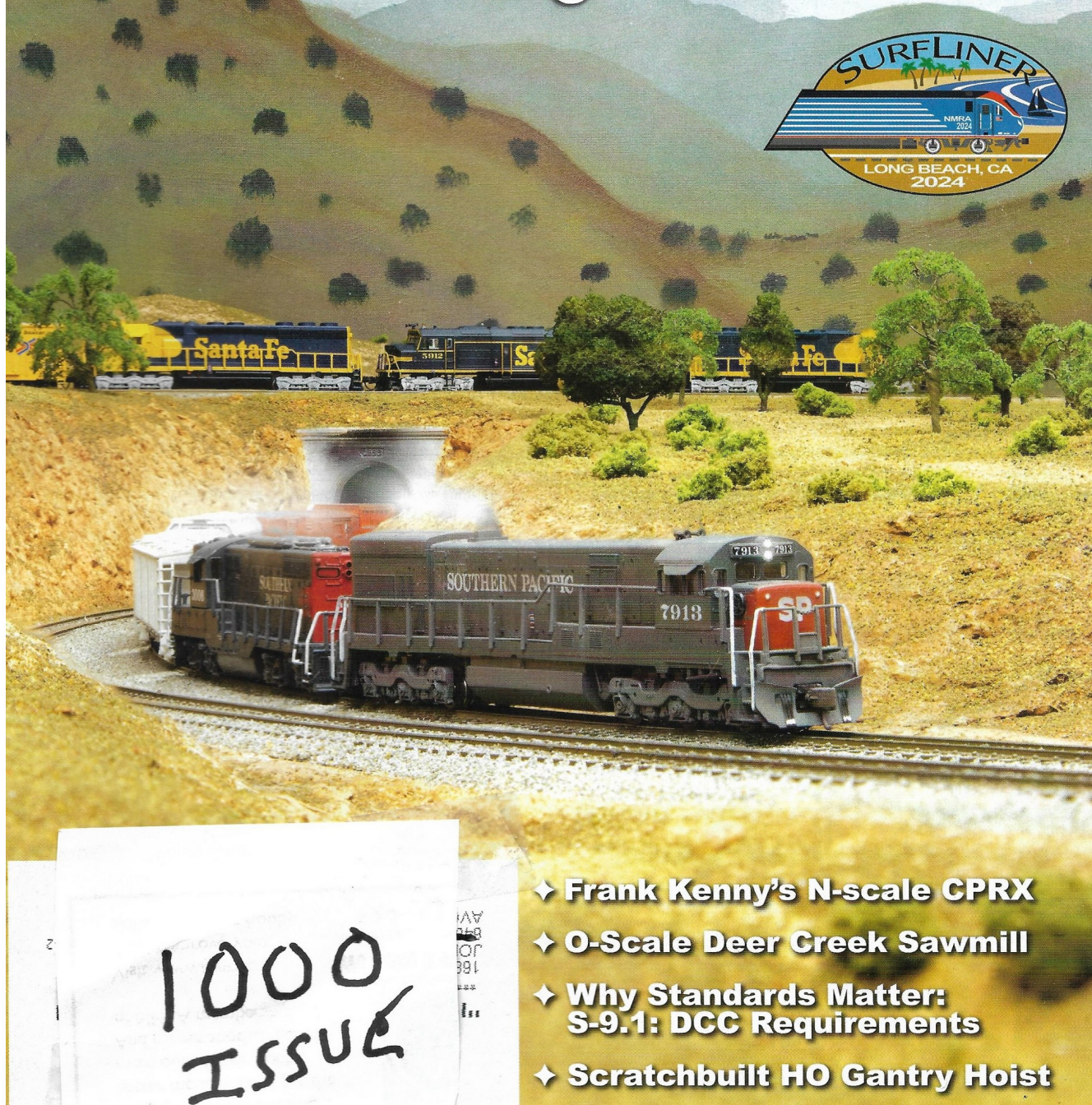
Peter Magoun, MMR®
Thomas Maladecki, MMR®
Kenneth Matassa
John Math
Thomas Mauszycki, MMR®
Leslie Mayor
Don Mayo
Robert McCall
James McClain
James McTigue
Terrance Merriman
Ronald Mical
Jeff Miller
Joseph Minkstein
George Molitor
Harrison Mosser
William Munson
James Murrie
Robert Myers
Richard Nedrow
Thomas Nelson
Tom O'Connor
J. Oglesby III
Jim Packer, MMR®
Mark Painter
Carlos Pargen
Robert Parvin
Frank Pearsall
Scott Perrin
Kenneth Pettit
Eugene Pizzetta
Robert Polasky
Darius Puff
Gene Rasmussen
David Ray
William Raymond, MMR®
David Read
Bill Reese

2024 July

nmra

July 2024

magazine



1000
ISSUE

- ◆ Frank Kenny's N-scale CPRX
- ◆ O-Scale Deer Creek Sawmill
- ◆ Why Standards Matter:
S-9.1: DCC Requirements
- ◆ Scratchbuilt HO Gantry Hoist

2024 July Ray Pershing the newest AP National Chairman. He replaced Frank Koch.



2024 July

MICHAEL C. BRESTEL TRIBUTE

MICHAEL C. BRESTEL

(1951–2024)

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Mike Brestel, HLM & NMRA Fellow, on May 22, 2024, at the age of 73. Mike embodied the spirit of volunteerism and service at all levels of the NMRA for over 57 years. He provided outstanding service to our members and staff, mentored future leaders, and encouraged members at all levels of our organization.

Mike was much more than a volunteer to the NMRA. He was a husband to Mary, father to his daughter Rebecca, and grandfather to two adorable girls. He served his community through the Booster group at his offspring's school and the Civic Business Association. He was active in his church and served as a youth group leader for many years. He was an avid Cincinnati Reds fan and followed the Reds to his last days.

We know Mike best for his service to the NMRA starting in 1966 when he was only 15 years old — even before he joined the NMRA in 1967. He became a Life Member early on when his wife gave it to him as a present. He was on the publicity committee for the 2006 National NMRA Convention in Cincinnati — a convention sponsored by The Cincinnati Model Railway Club (established in 1934), an O-scale Club that Mike joined much later and served as Club President for many years.

Mike was a former NMRA President (2006–2012), Vice-President (2004–2006), Mid-Central Region National Trustee (1993–2004), At-Large World-Wide Director, Nominating Committee Chair, Publications Manager, Policy Committee Chair, Honor Committee Chair, Calendar Editor, Insurance Coordinator, and was a member of the Howell Day Museum Committee. He became Honorary Life Member #58



Above: Mike Brestel (right) tours the California Southern Railway Museum with NMRA Chief Administrative Officer Jenny Hendricks. The CSRM is where the NMRA's "Magic of Model Railroad" gallery exhibit now resides. — Gerry Leone, MMR® photo



Above: Mike Brestel (left) received a President's Award from then-President Pete Magoun, MMR® during the Board of Directors meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2019. — Robert Amsler photo

in 2012, received a Meritorious Service Award, four President's Awards (2005, 2016, 2019, 2021), and was honored with an NMRA Fellow award in 2024.



Above: Mike Brestel (left) tours the CSRM with Stacey (Walthers) Naffah and the late John Roberts. — Stephen M. Priest, MMR® photo

He was the Publicity Chair for the 1980 National Model Railroad Exposition in Cincinnati, which was sponsored by the Model Railroad Industry Association (MRIA).

In the Mid-Central Region, Mike served as President (1976–1983), National Region Trustee (1993–2004), and Region Contest Chair (1976–1983). He served the MCR well over the years.

He was an active member of Cincinnati Division 7 of the MCR in many different roles over the year. He served as Superintendent (1988–1992), Assistant Superintendent (1984–1988), Treasurer (1982–1984), Board of Directors (1993–1997 & 2023–2024), *OilCan* (newsletter) Editor (1972–1979), *OilCan* Publisher (1986–1997), and Special Projects Co-chair (2017–2021).

He was a member of four different train-related clubs over the years, serving each with passion and vision. He started with the Western Hills Model Railroad Club (HO), then The Cincinnati & Great Western Model Railroad Club (HO), then the Cincinnati Model Railway Club (O-2 Rail), the Cincinnati Railroad Club, and the Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society. He brought his knowledge and spirit of volunteerism to each club over the years.

He served the model railroad community by working in a hobby shop (The Model Railroad Shop) during his teen years, then at Walt's Hobby Shop, and then as owner of Western Hills Photo & Hobby Shop until his passing.

He was my closest friend for more than 50 years and will be missed every day. The consolation is that he is now with all the other close model railroad friends who have also passed away. We miss them all, but they now have unlimited space to build model railroads.

Frank Koch

Robert Ray earned Master Model Railroader 761.

2024 July

NMRA Gallery Third Anniversary Celebration

Article by John Stevens, HLM
Howell Day Museum Department Manager
Photos by Charlie Getz, HLM,
past-president NMRA

Serving as the Howell Day Museum Department Manager (HDMDM), my primary duty is overseeing The Magic of Scale Model Railroading Gallery, which opened on April 6, 2021, at the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) in Sacramento.

Getting to opening day was an adventurous undertaking that took way longer than any of us anticipated when the project started. It wouldn't have hap-

We'll start at 10:15 AM PDT in the Museum theater. We'll spend about 45 minutes to an hour in the theater and then proceed to the Gallery. After the Gallery visit, we'll move to one of the local restaurants for refreshments.

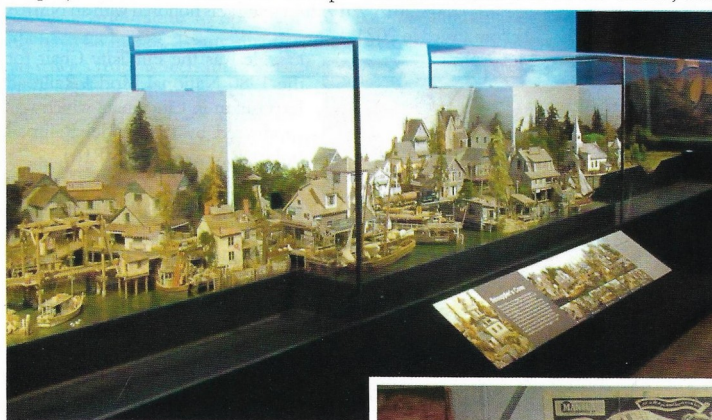
If you wish to attend this event, please RSVP at MUSEUM@NMRA.ORG no later than July 15, 2024. Your name will be placed on a VIP list located at the check-in area of the CSRM, and



you will be given complimentary access to the event. The museum opens at 10AM PDT, so please allow sufficient time to check in and then move to the theater. Space is limited.

If you can't attend the celebration in person, we have made it convenient for you to experience the Gallery virtually. You can find information about the Gallery at the following links. For a video tour of the Gallery presented by former President Charlie Getz, go to <https://www.nmra.org/videos/magic-model-railroading-video-tour-hosted-former-nmra-president-charlie-getz>. For a magazine article about building the Gallery, go to <https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/museum/21-0321-exhibitarticle.pdf>.

I hope to see you at the Celebration. Whether you can be there in person or not, I want to thank you for supporting the Gallery. 🙏



pened without the support of corporate sponsors, major donors, and members like you who donated money to the project. Unfortunately, the Gallery didn't get the celebration it deserved when it opened due to the COVID restrictions imposed by the State of California.

When I took over as HDMDM in late 2021, one of my goals was to celebrate the Gallery properly. Even this took longer to plan than I thought it would. Once the Gallery was open to the public, we determined we needed to make some changes near the entrance and the exit to improve the visitors' experience. That work has been completed, and we are now ready to hold the NMRA Gallery Third Anniversary Celebration on July 31, 2024, at the CSRM — and you are invited to attend!



2024 August 1

Posted on Facebook NMRA Page



Today, we at the National Model Railroad Association celebrate a special milestone with hearts full of joy and pride. For three wonderful years, "The Magic of Scale Model Railroading" exhibit has enchanted visitors at the California State Railroad Museum, bringing our passion to life for all to see.

President Gordy Robinson shared these touching reflections: "This exhibit represents the heart and soul of our beloved hobby. It's a testament to the dreams, dedication, and boundless creativity of model railroaders across generations.

Each miniature scene tells a story of love for trains and the history they represent. Our hobby is truly magical – it transforms us into artists, engineers, and keepers of history. Through our creations, we not only preserve the legacy of the railroads but also spark wonder in the eyes of children and adults alike.

The friendships forged and memories made in this community are as precious as the models we create. From helping a newcomer lay their first track to marveling at master craftsmanship, the spirit of camaraderie in model railroading is unmatched.

As we look to the future, let's continue to welcome new model railroaders with open arms, especially young dreamers who might discover their life's passion through our hobby."

President Robinson expressed heartfelt thanks to the museum, NMRA members, and all who support the world of model railroading. Here's to many more years of miniature marvels and shared joy!

August 2024 Surfliner National Convention



It is wonderful seeing young people involved in the Hobby.

August 2024 Surfliner National Convention



Some of our 2024 Surfliner Convention goers took a second to snap a group photo while on their #Prototype tour to the Historic Union Station Los Angeles! A big thank you to their team for their hospitality!



President Gordy Robinson presents **Frank Koch with his Award!**

August 2024 Surfliner National Convention **HOBO BREAKFAST**



Congratulations to Michelle Kempema and Leslie Eaton, MMRs for winning the trivia contest at this year's #HoboBreakfast during the 2024 Convention!

A bit of history: The Hobo Breakfast is a cherished PCR/PSR tradition dating back to 1961. It brings together "Hobos" - model railroaders who've attended at least one NMRA National convention outside their home region. The breakfast fosters camaraderie among well-traveled model railroaders and welcomes all to join in the fun!

Started by Karl Busch (aka "T. Russ Rod"), the Hobo group encourages convention attendance and celebrates the joy of model railroading. While the regions have evolved, the spirit of the Hobo Breakfast remains strong across both the Pacific Coast and Pacific Southwest Regions.

August 2024 Surfliner National Convention

NMRA President Gordy Robinson giving the **President's Award at the NMRA Banquet to Jennifer Howell and Nick Lisica. So well deserved!! These Awards were for Service to their Division.**



August 2024 Surfliner National Convention



Eastern District Director John Doehring, is the “Fashion Plate” of the NMRA. Everyone is waiting to see what the next bow tie will be!

August 2024 **Chris Thompson received an Award!**



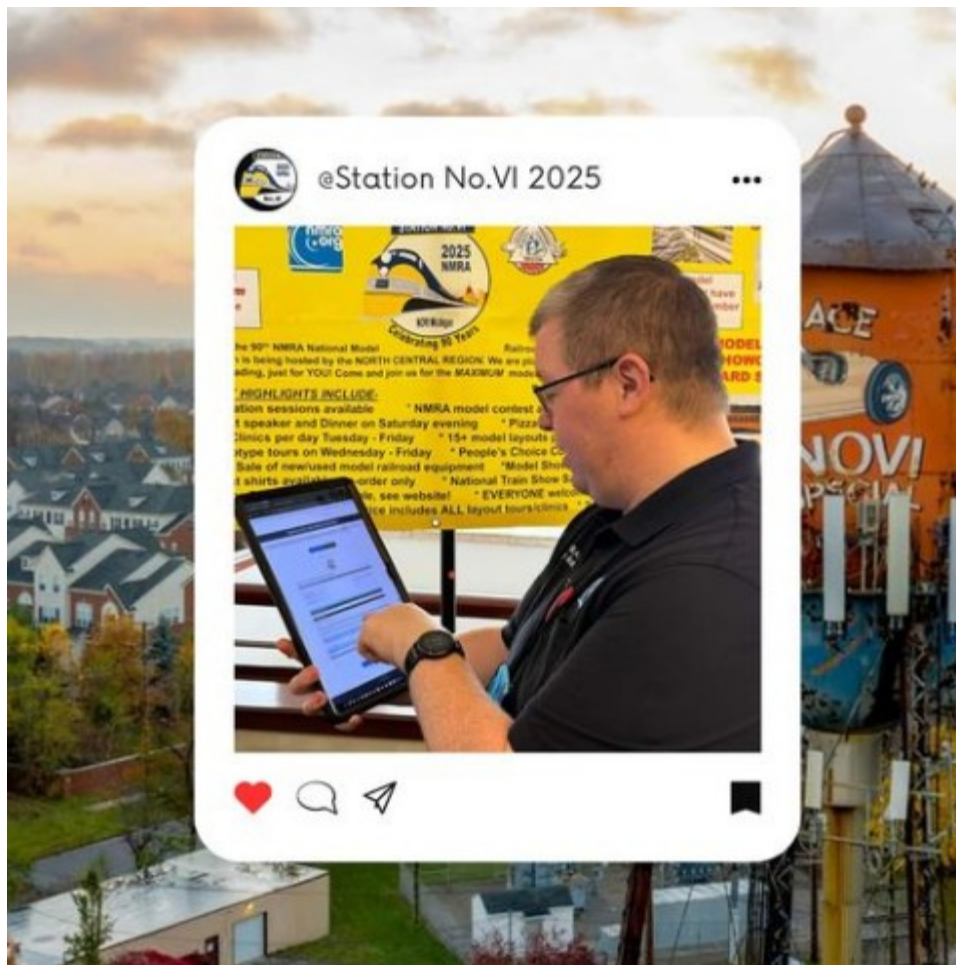
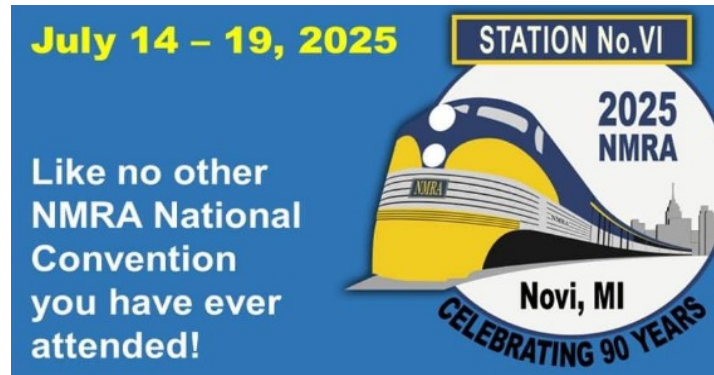
Below: NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR® (right), presented Chris Thompson with a Meritorious Service Award for his volunteer work in the Standards & Conformance Department. The Meritorious Service Award reflects dedicated and long-term service by a member for participation in one or more of the various administrative departments and/or committees of the association. The respective Department Head selects the recipient.

Drew James earned Master Model Railroader 762.

Kel Sherson earned Master Model Railroader 764.

Dennis Dreher earned Master Model Railroader 766.

It is the very last day of the 2024 Surfliner National Convention in Sunny California! Guess what our President Gordy Robinson is doing? He is the **FIRST to register for our 90th anniversary convention in Novi, Michigan for 2025.**



President Gordy Robinson first to sign-up for 2025 Novi, MI.!

August 2024 Franklin IN, Connie Coy: becomes 12th lady MMR overall, but First lady MMR in MWR / CID and also the 5th overall but FIRST 3-railer lady MMR!



LEFT PHOTO: Midwest Region President Bob McGeever presents Midwest Region Secretary Connie Coy with her Master Model Railroader #763 plaque. RIGHT Photo: Central Indiana Division Superintendent Daniel Banks is pictured with Connie and Bob. Connie became the 12th woman to earn MMR.



Bob McGeever, Connie Coy and John Coy

ANOTHER FIRST! By virtue of Connie earning her MMR, she and husband John (MMR #730) became the **5th married couple to achieve MMR**. However, they are the **FIRST 3-railers married couple** (center “inside” rail) to accomplish that feat.

August 2024 A FIRST! ALL MMR BIOS ONLINE



Today at the annual CID picnic board meeting I, Daniel Banks, Superintendent of the Central Indiana Division, was proud to step in for Gordy and present the **President's Award to John Coy**, MMR #730.

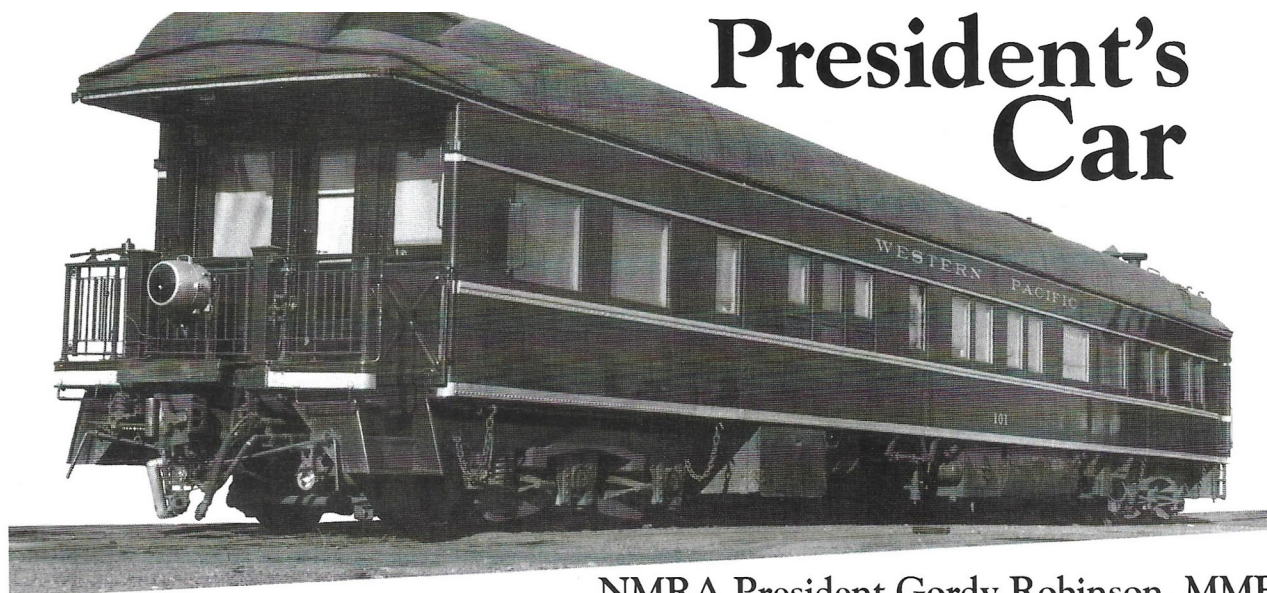
The following was written by NMRA President Gordy Robinson:

*By decree of the President of the National Model Railroad Association, it is with great pleasure that we bestow the prestigious President's Award upon the esteemed John Coy MMR For his exemplary dedication and outstanding contribution to the model railroading community, Mr. Coy has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to preserving the rich history and legacy of our beloved hobby. Through his tireless **efforts in compiling the biographies of all Master Model Railroaders, John Coy has created an invaluable resource that not only honors the achievements of these distinguished individuals but also serves as an inspiration to model railroaders of all levels.***

This comprehensive compilation stands as a testament to the skill, creativity, and passion that defines the pinnacle of our craft. It provides a lasting tribute to those who have achieved the highest level of proficiency in model railroading and offers a wealth of knowledge and insight for future generations of enthusiasts.

John's work embodies the spirit of camaraderie and knowledge-sharing that is at the heart of the NMRA. His dedication to documenting the journeys of our Master Model Railroaders ensures that their expertise and experiences will continue to guide and motivate others for years to come. In recognition of this monumental achievement, we proudly present John Coy MMR with the President's Award, with our sincerest gratitude for his outstanding service to the model railroading community.

Presented this 17th of August, 2024



President's Car

NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR®

As the calendar turns to August, we find ourselves on the cusp of a most splendid occasion: our National Convention, which, as you are all undoubtedly aware, shall be held this year in the picturesque locale of Long Beach, California. This annual gathering is a veritable festival of fellowship, innovation, and passion for the noble pursuit of model railroading.

Next year, our members will assemble in the delightful town of Novi, Michigan. It is worth noting that next year's National Convention will return to July. Thus, for those who cannot join us in Long Beach this year, rest assured that you will have but a brief 11-month interlude before the next opportunity to immerse yourself in the camaraderie and shared knowledge of our cherished community. Registration will commence in August 2024, and I encourage you to visit nmra2025.com to explore the myriad of activities and events awaiting you in Novi.

As is customary, the National Convention is preceded by our summer Board of Directors meeting. Consequently, I shall not be able to provide you with updates on the proceedings until the October 2024 edition of the

NMRA Magazine. Reflecting on the six months that have elapsed since our last national BoD meeting, I am proud to report numerous achievements. We have augmented member benefits and forged a partnership with Grouper, enabling eligible members, including life members, to enjoy complimentary NMRA membership.

A noteworthy endeavor that has seen significant progress is replacing the NMRA membership system. While this system may not be something you interact with daily, it is indeed the vital lifeblood that powers our member records and facilitates our interactions with you. It also meticulously tracks your progress through our education programs, powers our online shop, and manages renewals. It ought to be the very heart of our administrative machinery. However, years of underinvestment left our team relying on an antiquated FoxPro and Access database system.

Regrettably, these archaic systems do not communicate with each other nor with any of the NMRA's other technological platforms, including our website, online store, and digital magazine application. This disjointed arrangement

necessitates dual entry by our administrative team. Imagine, if you will, that every time someone renews or joins the NMRA, makes a purchase from our store, or sends an email to headquarters, a team member must print that transaction and manually enter it into the membership system. Each morning at 6 am, our indefatigable IT Manager, Speed, must manually update our website and digital applications with the latest changes. This is the year 2024, not 1984, and such inefficiency can no longer be tolerated.

Should you have ever wondered why you did not receive a welcome email from the NMRA or experienced delays in activating your membership or access to our website and digital applications, you now should have an insight into the root cause. Those in leadership roles across the organization are acutely aware of the frustrations engendered by receiving the end-of-month (EOM) report. These reports are laboriously prepared by our administrative team and are challenging to decipher. The crux of these issues lies in the obsolescence of our technological infrastructure. Since assuming the presidency of NMRA in 2021, I have made it

my mission to steer the organization toward sustainability and to position it as the epicenter of our hobby for another 90 years.

At last year's National Convention, I entrusted Magnus Christerson from the Pacific Northwest Region (PNR) with chairing a presidential committee dedicated to digital transformation and innovation within our organization and our hobby. Magnus and his team have collaborated closely with Jenny Hendricks, our Admin Manager, and her team to identify the requirements for a modern membership system and to select a preferred supplier.

The implementation of this new system has now commenced, despite the complexity added by our annual audit being integrated into the project plan. Such implementations are invariably intricate, and our antiquated systems pose a particular challenge. Over our 89-year history, we have amassed over 200 different membership types. While not all are currently offered, they remain part of our organizational records.

The project's focus will initially be on replacing the Access and FoxPro databases used daily with the new membership system. This new system will also power our online store, eliminating dual entry and providing a more seamless experience when joining or renewing your membership or making purchases. The existing payment issues should also be resolved.

Once these foundational tasks are established, it is my hope that we will securely integrate the membership data into our other digital systems — emails, digital publications, and website — enabling members to have one unified account. This integration will alleviate several points of frustration for those who regularly interact with our digital technology. We will also transition from end-of-

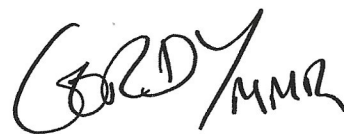
month reporting to providing secure access to compartmentalized reports for NMRA leadership worldwide.

From our starting point at the beginning of this year to the realization of this vision is a journey that I anticipate will extend well into 2025. However, we are on the correct path, and this in itself is a monumental step in the right direction.

Turning our gaze toward 2025 and our 90th anniversary, I am delighted to announce that at our 2024 NMRA Members meeting on the Thursday of our National Convention in Long Beach, we shall unveil our vision for celebrating 90 illustrious years of the NMRA. The cornerstone of this celebratory year will be our actual birthday on the U.S. Labor Day weekend in September 2025. I urge you to contemplate how your club, Division, or Region can unite to celebrate and share our beloved hobby during this momentous weekend.

Moreover, we have a dedicated team working on special branding and logos that you will be able to utilize to promote the NMRA and your events throughout the year. As always, there is a wealth of activity within our organization, driven by a fellowship of model railroaders who volunteer their time for the benefit of others worldwide. Regrettably, much of this labor is only visible to a select few, yet its impact is far-reaching.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your continued support of your fellow model railroaders. It is your passion and dedication that sustain our vibrant community and propel us toward a future brimming with promise and possibility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gordy MMR". The signature is stylized, with the "G" and "M" being particularly prominent and connected to the rest of the name.

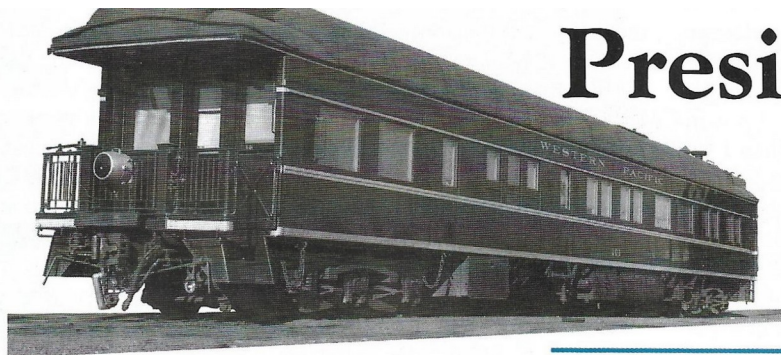
2024 September



Posted on Facebook: Division Superintendent Drew James received his MMR at the North Eastern Region (NER) convention in Rochester, New York!



**Paul Flint, Alasdair Brown, Malcolm Gauld, NMRA Pres. Gordy Robinson
Scotland Division Members of the National Model Railroad
Association, British Region at the 2024 Region Convention.**



President's Car

NMRA President
Gordy Robinson, MMR®

Come for the Trains; Stay for the People

Model railroaders can achieve anything when we work together. The sense of accomplishment is palpable at a sizeable modular event, where more than 100 model railroaders, each working on their modules in isolation, unite to build something unprecedented. This collective effort, guided by the same straightforward standards, results in a creation that is unique and will never be replicated.

Not everyone brings a module or something to run, but everyone brings something to the event — technology, rolling stock, snacks, etc. — to achieve

the common goal. Model railroaders really are better people when we put everything else aside and work together to fellowship in our hobby.

At the end of July, I was fortunate to attend the first event put on by the 100-percent-NMRA-member club, the N-Scale Events Group, or NEG. This group was founded in November 2023 with the sole purpose of coordinating large N-Scale modular events. Their first event was in Evanston, Wyoming, this past July. The event featured all

three main N-Scale modular types, with T-TRAK and NTRAK operating in the beautiful restored former Union Pacific roundhouse. Next door, the former machine shop housed the event's centerpiece: the Freemo-N layout, with an impressive 1,600-plus-foot main line (approximately 50 N-scale miles).

I ran a train from one end of the layout and back, which took me nearly six and a half hours! After that run, I felt like I had done a shift. Operating sessions on this massive layout required

Below: Members of the N-Scale Events Group (NEG), a 100-percent-NMRA club, who organized the Evanston (Wyoming) N-scale operations event this past July. — RJ Pieper, M. Photog, CPP





Above: Attendees of the Evanston (Wyoming) N-scale operations event this past July, representing Freemo-N, NTRAK, and T-TRAK. — RJ Pieper, M. Photog, CPP

three dispatchers, five yardmasters, and everyone else to grab a throttle and run a train.

The event had published public viewing hours from noon to 4:00 on Saturday, and those who came were wowed by what they saw. Other members of the public came in randomly throughout the weekend to see why the parking lot was full of trailers of all sizes. Most were in awe of the scale of the event; a 4x8-foot layout this was not!

Great events like this, though, can only happen when we set aside any personal ambitions and agree to focus on a common goal for the good of all. The same is true of any NMRA Division. We all know the joke that three model railroaders means two model railroad clubs, but it doesn't need to be like that. For the NMRA to function, we must check the baggage of the outside world at the door, leave the politicking for another time, and focus not only on the trains but on the people. How else do we ensure that together in fellowship, we all enjoy the hobby,

are allowed to grow, and are all participating?

We often have many projects on the go, but what is the real goal we have if you are in a Division where activities are few and far between? Where the fellowship is on paper but not being lived; whose fault is that? Well, it's all of us because we all have it in us to build that model, help that person, and enjoy our hobby — together. We have to motivate ourselves to reduce the number of projects that don't get us to where we want to be and remember that at the heart of everything we do, the people matter above anything else.

So, if you want more things to happen, remember that you have the power to make them happen. Focus on what needs to be done, overcome the obstacles, and above all else, remember to enjoy this great hobby together. Let the joy of the hobby be your guide and inspiration.

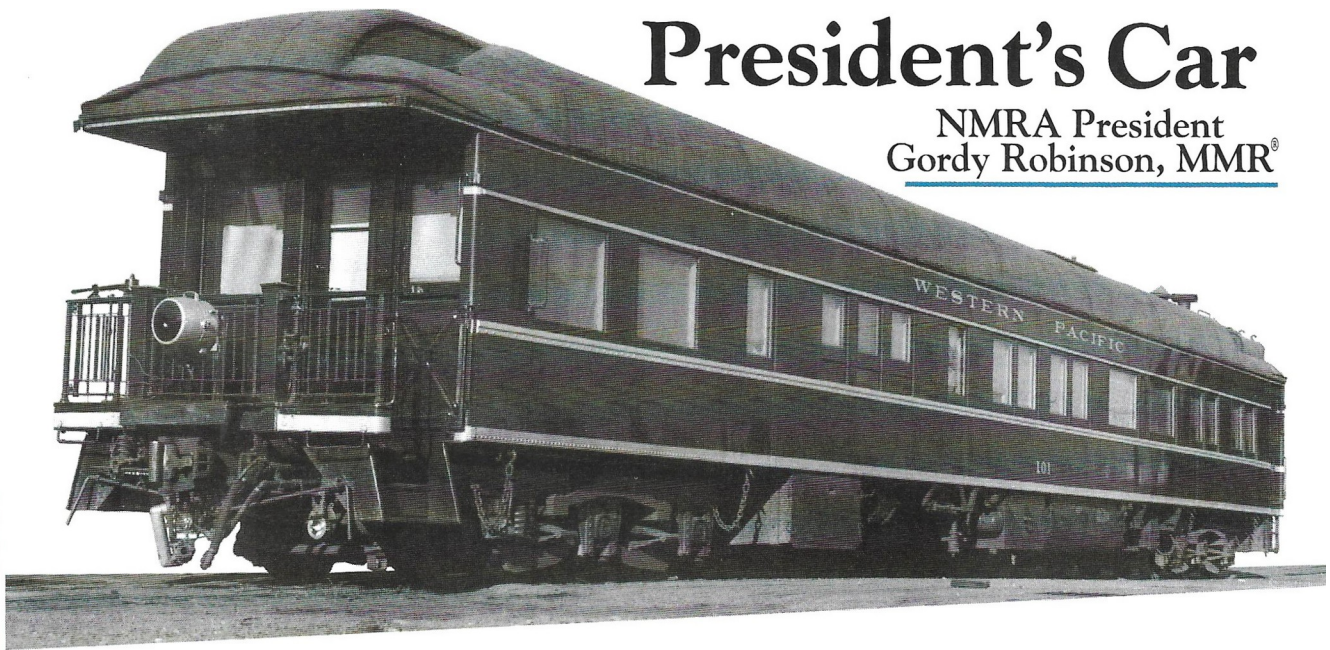
CRD/MMR

Keith Stamper earned Master Model Railroader 767.

2024 October

President's Car

NMRA President
Gordy Robinson, MMR®



All Aboard for the NMRA's 90th Anniversary!

September 1st is our birthday, and the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) is gearing up to celebrate a monumental milestone next year – its 90th anniversary! Since its humble beginnings in 1935, the NMRA has been the heartbeat of the model railroading community, fostering a love for the hobby, connecting enthusiasts worldwide, and inspiring generations to explore the magic of scale model railroading.

As we mark this momentous occasion, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of our members. Your passion, creativity, and dedication have been the driving force behind the NMRA's success, and we couldn't have made it this far without you. From our early days as a small group of passionate hobbyists to our current status as a thriving organization with over 15,000 members, the NMRA has played a pivotal role in shaping the hobby we all love.

A Year-Long Celebration

In the coming year, we'll celebrate our 90th anniversary in style. Get ready

for exciting events, special programs, and exclusive content commemorating this historic occasion. We'll also be looking ahead to the future of model railroading, exploring new technologies, trends, and opportunities that will keep our beloved hobby thriving for years to come.

We'll be organizing events throughout the year and special events on Labor Day weekend 2025. The first event to put on your calendar will be the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield, Massachusetts, in January 2025.

Whether you're a seasoned model railroader or just starting, we invite you to join us as we celebrate our rich history and look forward to an exciting future. Stay tuned for updates on our anniversary celebrations, and here's to the next chapter in our incredible journey!

Digital Projects Updates

As we continue to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of our members, we're excited to share updates on some of our digital projects.

The NMRA Magazine Digital Edition

Launched in April 2022, our digital magazine has grown to a subscriber base of approximately 62 percent of global NMRA members — a remarkable achievement, especially considering that when we first launched the digital edition, we had about 62 percent of NMRA members who subscribed to the print edition. This fall, our members in Australia and New Zealand will be asked if they'd like to receive the digital magazine, so keep an eye out for an email from the NMRA in September to share your opinion.

The NMRA Interchange (Discord)

Our Discord platform, launched last year, has grown to over 1,000 members. While it may not be for everyone, it's proven valuable for enhancing member engagement, especially for those who can't attend local Division meetings. We've also seen members adopt Discord as a collaboration tool for projects on a local level, including

event planning for modular meet-ups, conventions, and Division/club activities.

New NMRA Membership System

Our new membership system is set to go live at the end of March 2025. This significant project will replace our End of Month reports with direct access to membership data for Regions and Divisions, connect our digital systems (website, *NMRA MAGAZINE*, etc.) with one account, and provide event registrations for National and Region events, as well as member self-service to interact with your records. While the initial rollout will be internal, we have a roadmap to deliver these features over the coming years.

Achievement Program App

Our IT team has been developing an app to track and validate your journey through the Achievement Program. We'll be moving to beta testing with two Divisions in the fall of 2024, hoping to roll out the app worldwide by the end of 2025. The app will augment our current paper process, allowing you to keep all your evidence and track your journey. When the time is right, you'll be able to validate your progress with other members, such as attendance at events for Volunteer points or op sessions for your Chief Dispatcher, and receive direct feedback through the app.

Achievement Program Updates - Low-Relief Structures

At the summer Board of Directors meeting held in Long Beach, California, in August 2024, the board passed a motion to amend the requirements of the Master

Builder – Structures Certificate. The new requirements will permit modelers to enter a foreground or background structure, which must have a roof and at least three sides to be entered for merit award assessment or as one of the required superdetailed structures. The structure must have at least 10 scale feet of side walls modeled to qualify.

The Achievement Program team has an article in this issue of the *NMRA MAGAZINE* (page 54), detailing these new requirements and the existing ones for the Structures AP. Questions should be directed to your local AP coordinator, Region AP Manager, or the National AP Manager, Ray Persing.

A Bright Future Ahead

As we celebrate our 90th anniversary, we're excited to look ahead to the future of model railroading. With new technologies, trends, and opportunities on the horizon, we're confident that our beloved hobby will continue to thrive for years to come. We're committed to providing our members with the resources, support, and community they need to pursue their passion for model railroading.

So, join us on this journey as we celebrate our rich history and look forward to an exciting future. Whether you're a seasoned model railroader or just beginning, we invite you to be a part of the NMRA's next chapter. Let's raise a water tower to the next 90 years of model railroading excellence!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GORDON MMR", with a stylized flourish.

Lowell Didas earned Master Model Railroader 768.

2024 November



Barbara Soward, one awesome lady!

Fred Soward, Central District Director of the NMRA - National Model Railroad Association Wrote the following on a Facebook Post:

This is why I love my wife.

I was working the entrance to today's Division 8 MCR NMRA Louisville, KY, Train Show & Sale. when a gentleman approached me with a request. He had a younger gentleman named Chuck with him and asked me to show Chuck around the event.

And then he disappeared back outside, leaving Chuck and me alone! I couldn't leave my post, so I called Ms Barbara over to help me out, calling her away from her assigned job at the train show.

That's when I noticed Chuck was holding a white cane. I briefly explained the situation to Barbara (Soward), hoping she could speak with Chuck for a few minutes before the drop-off guy returned.

Barbara quickly found out that the drop-off guy was a TARC3 (door-to-door ADA paratransit) driver who would not return for Chuck before a couple hours passed.

Barbara also found out that Chuck was totally blind, but wanted to "see" the show. So, without hesitation, off they went into the show with Chuck hanging onto Barbara's elbow. Together, for the next two hours, they visited model railroad dealer tables and model railroad layouts, stopping to speak with dealers and exhibitors along the way.

At every single stop, the people they visited were patient, understanding, and willing to allow Chuck to "see" with his hands by touching the model railroad cars and locomotives. Not one person, not even once, said no or winced at the request. At the Lionel layout, the crew stopped the trains running 'round and 'round to allow Chuck to touch the train cars one by one.

In the end, Chuck did make a purchase at the show and Barbara finally guided him to the exit where he met his TARC3 driver.

And that, my friends, is why I love this hobby of model railroading and the people who make it so.--by Fred Soward

2024 November

Stephen Drees earned Master Model Railroader 770.

Tony Thompson earned Master Model Railroader 772.

2024 November

Long-time NMRA Central IN Division Member **Keith Clark was the **Editor of the division newsletter, the *Rusty Spike***, for the past twenty years. That is an amazing feat! That took a tremendous amount of dedication. Supt. Daniel Banks presented Keith (left) an award plaque thanking him for his **twenty (20) years of service**.**



2024 December **John Robert Coy, MMR #730, compiled a 90 year history of the NMRA over this past year. This document is the largest compilation of NMRA history ever assembled!**

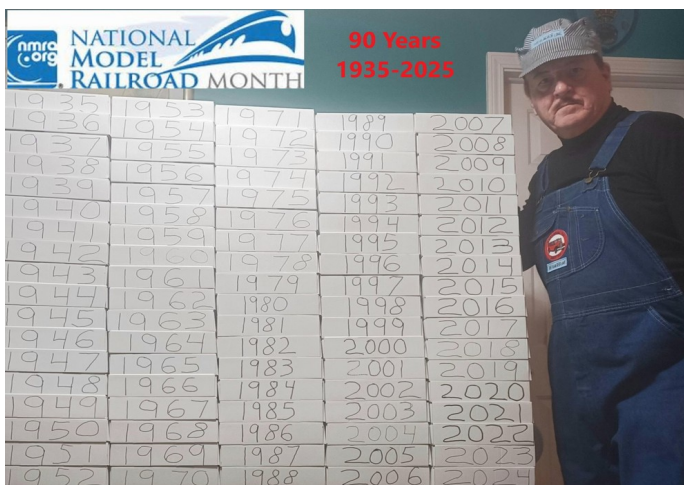


Photo shows containers that hold 90 years worth of Bulletins!



The NMRA: Who Are We?

Well, Happy Holidays! It's December again, although you'll receive this issue in November, so I am covering my bases for U.S. Thanksgiving. You'll get another missive from me before the end of the year, but I'll, of course, pretend to be in the future as it'll be the January 2025 issue marking the start of the NMRA's 90th year.

It's a considerable achievement to have reached 90 years in any organization, and everyone should be very proud to have played their part in keeping the wheels on track for so long. This year, as in previous years, we lost some notable people who have been pillars of our hobby and organization; Allen McClelland and Mike Brestel, to name just two. We've also seen several people discover or rediscover our hobby and the NMRA; the hobby endures, but unfortunately, we are always losing some of the people in it to the Big Railroad in the Sky.

In October 2023, I attended three Region Conventions and the Chicagoland Railroad Prototype Modelers meet. In 2024, October was a much calmer month as I remained in the United Kingdom but did make what felt like a rare trip off the Island

down to England for the British Region Convention. For the first time in a number of years, the convention was held just outside London about 20 minutes from London Heathrow. In 2022, the European Region amalgamated back into the British Region, and we've had a number of European members join in with Region activities, including this year with two layouts present built by members living in France and Germany.

Members attended from as far away as Israel, and three U.S.-based members came across for the convention. There were many, many discussions during the weekend, and I was able to catch up with lots of old friends, including some members I have known for over 20 years — which, as a thirty-something, is significant for me at least. There was one really interesting discussion, though, at the Region AGM. If you are a regular attendee at these kinds of meetings, you know they can venture far off-topic. The gist of the conversation was started by an innocent question by Region President Peter Borchers: what would you put on an NMRA banner for a train show?

Suggestions varied from which prototype should be on the banner.

Since we are in the UK, of course, the discussion explored whether it should be North American models or UK trains, and then should we not include European prototypes? We then moved on to what scale the pictures should be with many suggestions. All the while, I wondered how someone was supposed to tell the scale from a picture on a banner across a large room and why this even matters. We moved on to the meat of the discussion: what words should be on the banner, and no, I don't mean railroad or railway; rather, how do we describe or sell ourselves to the hobbyists?

Who is the NMRA? Where is the NMRA? What does the NMRA do? If you have asked me to tell you why model railroaders should join the NMRA, you will know my usual stock answer is that it's an individual reason; i.e., we do many things, and there should be one that appeals to you. However, during that discussion, listening to the other members, I thought about this slightly differently as we were discussing specifically how to make the NMRA stand out in a train show crowded with booths for model railroad clubs, historical societies (many of which in the

UK have a modeling section), and a host of other things people can join. What is the thing the NMRA can do that the others can't? Then it struck me: if I had a banner with nothing but three words, I would probably have a flock of people at my table. What are those three words, you ask? "Model Railroad Education."

That is truly something that the NMRA can offer that no other organization does consistently; we are the only organization with an Achievement Program. What we lack is a way to help people get to that level, and no, I don't mean mentorship. However, that is a significant part of helping the people working at the level of completing their Master Model Railroader, as they often have years of experience and are really looking to hone their skills to output great models for assessment. No, I mean, what about the education that takes a modeler from beginner to that level? I see lots of Divisions now offering a weekend or day per year where they have a modelers' retreat and work together on their personal projects.

I think these types of activities are a great way to help and support each other no matter where that model will go next: straight to a shelf, onto a layout, to a friend, or into an AP assessment. Suppose you think about an educational establishment like a university or a high school. In that case, the social aspect, the extracurricular activities, the identity, and advocacy are really important. Still, above all others, the education you learn by attending is why people choose to associate themselves with the organization. For many, it's for the rest of their lives long after they have ceased to be students.

My thought for this month is: If education about scale model rail-

roading is at the core of what we do, how do we ensure that that is our primary focus for you, our members at the Region and Division levels? How do we ensure that we offer a consistent experience?

If we want to be around for another 90 years, we need to be the first place people think of when they want to grow their knowledge of model railroading or learn a new skill. Yes, they can do some of that on YouTube, but I learn much more from my fellow model railroaders than on YouTube.

We should be building a global community of model railroaders who we have equipped with the tools for constant improvement and enjoyment of model railroading. All those social aspects that I know we hold so dear in our memories of past NMRA events are pleasant side effects, and the caring nature of the folks in our hobby will always be there.

Please enjoy this holiday season with your family and friends; I hope you are planning a little break from all the eating to enjoy some modeling time. Recharge for 2025 and start thinking about those New Year's Resolutions, like attending the National Convention in Novi, Michigan; introducing ten friends to the NMRA; and completing an AP Certificate.

Happy Holidays,





Let's Interchange

I joined the NMRA's Interchange (on Discord) shortly after it became available for members in January 2023. I've not been known to be what you'd call an "early adopter" when it comes to new technology, and I did resist what I thought was yet another communication channel in the sea of social media outlets. However, I have found this members-only server quite helpful and fun to use in the nearly two years since joining. You can send direct messages to other members (like a chat), host a video chat or a meeting in a Hangout Room (kind of like Zoom or Teams, but free), share screens, post images, and so much more.

I'll admit it was a bit intimidating initially (getting started), only because I wasn't used to it. Fortunately, there's help on the nmra.org website on how to onboard, and current Interchange users are always willing to assist. And once inside, you'll have access to multiple topics where members have shared a wealth of ideas, photos, tips, techniques, prototype information, schematics... the list goes on and on (sign in at nmra.org for how to access).

I have set my phone version of the NMRA Interchange to notify me when new messages are added to certain forums and channels that interest me. When I see an intriguing topic or thread, I tap the notification and it takes me straight to that message in the Interchange. The "forums" (topics) make it much easier to search and find a post I read six months ago that would be really useful *right now* — try that on Facebook or Twitter. Of note, the desktop version of the Interchange is a bit easier for me to search for things, but that's true for any application I use.

Observation Car

NMRA Magazine Editor Cinthia Priest

Some of my favorite posts are pleas for assistance. Why? Because the questions are usually fascinating — perhaps modeling or prototype topics you've never heard of and now suddenly *need* to know more about. Recent examples include one person looking for instructions for a long-out-of-production kit. Another wanted to replicate the toggle switches his dad used on a long-gone layout. The wealth of responses to these queries always brings a giant smile to my face. NMRA members are so helpful!

As of this editorial, there are nearly 1,000 members on the Interchange, with more joining almost daily. Several virtual meetings are scheduled monthly in the Hangout Rooms, with some self-formed groups meeting weekly. Many more meetings occur in the Hangout rooms "ad hoc" or when planning events, such as the upcoming Amherst / Springfield Train Show in January and the NERx (Northeastern Region's annual virtual convention) in March 2025. Numerous Divisions and Regions post their newsletters to the Interchange, and several members have their own "posts" in a forum touting their modeling or layout progress. Channels for Special Interest Groups (SIGs), prototype railroads, rail tourism, and a plethora of general interest topics abound. Want to know more or have a question about specific aspects of the Achievement Program? There are channels for each of the certificates, too. ...even discussing proposed changes! The wealth of information in the Interchange is priceless; when you join, you get access to all of it. *All aboard!*

Cinthia

December 2024

ERIC LUNDBERG TRIBUTE



MMR NO. 81, ERIC LUNDBERG

In Memoriam: Former NMRA President Eric Lundberg, HLM, MMR

Eric Lundberg was born in Michigan in 1934. He served in the U.S. Navy and later attended Michigan State University, graduating with a Journalism degree.

He started avidly building a model railroad in Flagstaff, Arizona, and then moved to Greeley, Colorado, to work for the University of Northern Colorado as its News Service Director. He moved again to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Eric served as the NMRA's Publications Department Chair and authored numerous model railroading articles for most modeling publications, mainly on Colorado railroad subjects, which often featured Leadville mining operations.

Eric earned Master Model Railroader #81 and served as NMRA President from 1990 to 1994. He was also past president for the Greeley Shortliners, the Northern Arizona Model Railroad Society, and the Rocky Mountain Region. He held monthly operating sessions on his model railroad until 2018. Eric passed away in July 2024, soon after losing his wife Sandy.

Mel McFarland

**2024 December Published in the Republican Newspaper of
Hendricks County, Indiana, by John Robert Coy, MMR #730**

SERVING HENDRICKS COUNTY SINCE 1847

The Republican

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Avon: Hotbed of Model Railroading?



Photo: Central Indiana Division of the National Model Railroad Association.

The Glacier Line Club of Avon. Back row, left to right: Rod Weinschenk, Joseph Coy, Phillip Burnside, Dr. Robert "Bob" Perry. Front row, left to right: Gregg Burks, Connie Coy, Chris Tonncheff, John Robert Coy.

**Local Group Keeps
Model Train Hobby Alive**

Many years ago, people routinely saw model railroads here, there, and everywhere! Hobby shops were on every side of town and all around Central Indiana. Model trains were in store windows and advertised in local papers. Model railroading is still to this very day one of the most popular hobbies ever!

Unfortunately, the Internet has all but killed the local hobby store. There are only a few hobby stores scattered far and wide where people may stumble across a model train. Model railroading just doesn't have the visibility it did 50 years ago due to the disappearance of the local hobby shop.

Do you realize that there are several great model railroads located right here in Hendricks County, Indiana? There are a large number of model railroad enthusiasts living here; many of whom are Members of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Central Indiana Division (CID).

Four of these people, Phillip Burnside, Dr. Robert Perry, Connie and John Coy, all of Avon, have achieved the distinction of Master Model Railroader. The way one earns a Master Model Railroader is to participate in the Achievement Program, which is an educational program designed to improve a participant's modeling skills.

Only 782 people from around the world have earned that distinction since October

of 1961. People who have earned Master Model Railroader are few and far between and to have four in Avon is simply incredible.

Connie Coy is ONLY one of 12 women to earn it the title. Connie is the FIRST woman in the Midwest Region and is also a Midwest Region Board Member.

The NMRA's primary mission and purpose is to promote the hobby and educate people in the craft of model railroading. As a Member of the NMRA, educational opportunities and resources abound! Outside of the NMRA, it is much more difficult these days because finding train enthusiasts is challenging.

However, it is NOT challenging if one seeks out the NMRA! There is a very large group (CID) that is right here in the center of Indiana that puts on multiple train shows, train displays, modeler's Meet, and special events annually.

If you are interested in model trains, these are the people to get involved with. Model railroading is a great family hobby. It is NOT just for males. The NMRA is fortunate to have many highly skilled and talented female modelers.

Come and see this craft at the annual Danville, Indiana Train Show or at the Avon-Washington Township Public Library on Saturday, February 22, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Model Railroading is the world's greatest hobby!